

Selections from Agat'angeghos' *History of the Armenians*

Translated from Classical Armenian
by Robert Bedrosian

For the heroes and villains

Available at Internet Archive: [Selections from Agat'angeghos](#).
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Published on the Internet, 2022.

Maps:

Most browsers permit decreasing (Ctrl and minus sign -) and increasing (Ctrl and plus sign +) image sizes.

in English:

from *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago, 2001) by Robert H. Hewsen:

Armenia in the Fourth Century, 299-387

[Armenia in the Fourth Century](#), at Internet Archive.

in Armenian:

Arsacid (Arshakuni) Kingdom, 298-387 (S. T. Eremyan, cartographer)

[Arsacid \(Arshakuni\) Kingdom, 298-387](#), at Internet Archive.

from *Haykakan sovetakan hanragitaran [Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia]*, Volume 2 (Erevan, 1976),
p. 112.

in Russian:

Armenia in the 1st-4th Centuries (S. T. Eremyan, cartographer)

[Armenia in the 1st-4th Centuries](#), at Internet Archive.

from a pamphlet issued in Erevan in the 1960s.

Additional Resources:

Wikipedia entries:

[Arsacid/Parthian empire](#), 247 B.C.–224 A.D.

[Arsacid Dynasty of Armenia](#)

Encyclopaedia Iranica:

[The Arsacid Dynasty of Armenia](#), by Cyril Toumanoff.

[Agathangeghos](#), article by R. W. Thomson.

Selection of texts and studies of [Agat'angeghos](#), at Internet Archive.

[Introduction](#) to Agat'angeghos' *History of the Armenians*, by Aram Ter-Ghewondyan.

[A Note on Pagination and Transliteration](#).

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19.

King Xosrov secures support from different peoples of the Caucasus—the Aghuank', Lp'ink', Chighpk', and Kaspk'—as well as the Huns. With them, he starts looting the territory from Assyria to the gates of the Persian capital, Ctesiphon.

20.

Xosrov sends messengers to his Arsacid kinfolk in Persia, but they have all gone over to the new Sasanian ruler, and ignore his pleas to join in deposing Ardashir.

21.

Xosrov does considerable damage in Persia before returning to the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayrarat, Armenia.

22.

The seven altars of the gods in Armenia are rewarded with war booty.

23.

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The Persian king seeks to have Xosrov assassinated, and promises a Parthian noble, named Anak, great gifts if successful.

28.

Anak and his brother gather their families and go to the Armenian territories, as though escaping from Sasanian rule. They arrive at the winter residence of the king, in the city of Uti, in the district of Xaghxagh.

[29.](#)

The refugees convince the Armenian king that they want to join him in exacting vengeance on the new Iranian dynasty and in overthrowing it.

[30.](#)

Convinced of Anak's trustworthiness, King Xosrov makes him second in honor in the Armenian kingdom. They spend the winter together in Uti.

[31.-32.](#)

On the arrival of spring, the king returns to the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayarat, and musters troops for another invasion. Anak and his brother murder King Xosrov.

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The Armenian lords pursue the murderers and kill them by hurling them off a bridge. Before dying, King Xosrov orders the extermination of Anak's clan. A baby son of Anak, the future Gregory the Illuminator, is saved by *dayeaks* ("guardians, nurses, tutors") who take him and flee to Byzantine territory.

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When the delighted King Ardashir hears about this, he promptly invades Armenia and conquers it. A baby son of the deceased King Xosrov, the future King Trdat, is saved by *dayeaks*, who also take him to Byzantine territory.

[37.-38.](#)

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[141.-148.](#)

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[149.-156.](#)

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[157.-163.](#)

A search for them is instituted in Armenia, and they are found in the buildings of the wine press, right in the capital city of Vagharshapat. A crowd gathers to see.

[164.-180.](#)

Hr'ip'sime' is taken to the palace, while her companions are left under guard at the wine press.

[181.-189.](#)

A wrestling match takes place in the king's bedroom, won by the champion Hr'ip'sime'.

[190.-197.](#)

Gayiane' is brought to the door, but only urges Hr'ip'sime' to resist. After defeating the king, Hr'ip'sime' forcibly leaves the city and returns to where she left her companions. Then she moves away from them, going to a solitary place. The king's men arrive and arrest her.

[198.-205.](#)

The execution of Hr'ip'sime' and its aftermath.

[206.-211.](#)

The execution of Gayiane' and its aftermath.

[212.-213.](#)

The king and his some of his entourage go hunting and are attacked and possessed by demons. Residents of the city are affected, also.

[214.-216.](#)

King Trdat's sister, Xosroviduxt, has a vision several times in which she is told to retrieve saint Gregory from the Pit.

[217.-219.](#)

A senior lord, O'tay, is sent to Artashat to see if Gregory is still living. Gregory is alive and is brought back to Vagharshapat.

[220.-224.](#)

King Trdat and the possessed lords rush to Gregory begging forgiveness. First, however, they must repent. Gregory has them reveal where the Christians had been martyred, and he temporarily collects their uncorrupted bodies. He makes his residence where they had lived, at the wine-press.

[225.-721.](#)

The lords come before Gregory again seeking forgiveness. Gregory begins to sermonize [226.-258.]. [Not translated, The Teachings of Saint Gregory, 259.-721.]

[722.-756.](#)

Additional preaching. Gregory's vision about animals that changed their colors: black goats turning into white sheep and white lambs becoming brown wolves. Not translated.

[757.-762.](#)

Gregory directs the building of chapels for the slain Christian martyrs. He does not allow the unbaptised crowds to enter the martyria. The nobles bring rich gifts and pile them up outside the structures.

[763.-772.](#)

King Trdat, still in the form of a hog, with tusks and hooves—but wearing a hairshirt—begs Gregory to partially transform him, so that he might participate in the building activities. Gregory prays, and the king's feet and hands return to their human form. The king, his wife, and sister all participate in the building work.

[773.-776.](#)

When the buildings are completed, Gregory prays again, and the king and all the people are fully healed. The people become interested in Christianity.

[777.-781.](#)

A decision is reached to demolish pagan temples. Enroute from Vagharshapat to Artashat, the temple of Tir is pulled down. Resistance of the pagan priests.

[782.-790.](#)

Gregory and the king travel around the country preaching and demolishing pagan temples: at T'ordan in Daranaghik' (temple of Barshamin); at Ani Kamax (temple of Zeus-Aramazd); in Erez district (temple of Anahit), in the hamlet of T'il (temple of Aramazd's daughter, Nane'); in Derjan district (temple of Aramazd's son, Mihr/Mithra) in the village of Bagayar'ich.

[791.-794.](#)

King Trdat calls an assembly and deliberates about having Gregory made chief priest.

[795.-796.](#)

King Trdat assembles the principal people from his lands. They prepare to accompany Gregory to Caesarea for ordination.

[797.-801.](#)

Not translated. Text of a letter addressed to Leontius (Ghewondios), archbishop of Caesarea, asking that he ordain Gregory.

[802.](#)

Description of the gifts the Armenian nobles take along on their trip to Caesarea.

[803.-805.](#)

Description of the royal sendoff of the Armenian delegation to Caesarea. Gregory's arrival in Caesarea, his reception by Archbishop (or *Kat'oghikos*) Leontius, and his ordination.

[806.-808.](#)

The Armenian delegation departs from Caesarea and travels to Sebastia, where it remains for some time. Gregory convinces many clerics from Sebastia to return with him so that he can designate them as priests for the Armenians.

809.

Enroute, Gregory stops in the district of Taron and destroys a sanctuary to the god Vahagn, with its altars to the goddesses Anahit and Astghik.

810.-816.

What happens to the relics that Gregory is bringing back from Byzantium. Gregory destroys more pagan shrines. He begins to baptize his followers.

817.-819.

King Trdat learns that Gregory is on the move, and goes with his retinue to await his arrival. Gregory returns to Armenia and is greeted by the king and the army.

820.-827.

Text of a letter Gregory delivers to King Trdat from the Byzantine cleric Leontius. Not translated [g415-g419].

828.-830.

Piety and prayers. Not translated [g419-g420].

831.-835.

Gregory orders a general fast. At its conclusion, there is a mass baptism in the Euphrates River.

836.-840.

Gregory designates feast-days, often on the days sacred to the ancient gods. Parcels of land are set aside for the Church. More churches are built, and priests and bishops are designated. He establishes separate schools for teaching children Greek and Syriac, and gathers children, especially from the pagan priests' families, to study.

841.-844.

Gregory returns to his estate in Vagharshapat city and expands his building, teaching, and ordaining activities. Description of the various areas with Armenian communities that Gregory visited: in Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and to the Syrian border. Among his activities, Gregory freed many prisoners and captives and destroyed some unjust contracts.

845.-846.

Monastic communities are established. Special attention is paid to the children of pagan priests, who are eventually elevated to the rank of bishop. Leaving Aghbianos as bishop of the royal court, Gregory retires to pray in isolated places.

847-858.

Prayers. Not translated [g428-g432].

[859-865.](#)

It is learned that Gregory, when young, had fathered two sons, Vrt'anes and Aristake's. They are brought to court and King Trdat takes them to find their father, who is residing in solitude in a cave. They get Gregory to ordain Aristake's as bishop, to replace him.

Introduction to Agat'angeghos' *History of the Armenians* by Aram Ter-Ghewondyan

Below is Robert Bedrosian's English translation of Ter-Ghewondyan's remarks, which appear on pp. 503-506 of [Agat'angeghay Patmut'iwn Hayots'/Agat'angeghos Hayots' Patmut'yun \[Agat'angeghos' History of the Armenians\]](#) [at Internet Archive] (Erevan, 1983), a publication of Erevan State University. This book has the Classical Armenian text, edited by G. Ter-Mkrtch'yan and S. Kanayants' (1909), with a facing Modern Armenian translation by Aram Ter-Ghewondyan. Published on the Internet, 2020.

[Page 503]

Agat'angeghos' *History of the Armenians*, a work of the 5th-century Golden Age of Classical Armenian literature, already had acquired an international dissemination by medieval times. To the present, some two dozen editions are known, (one of which, and the fundamental one, is the Classical Armenian text of the present edition), in nine medieval languages and variants: Armenian, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Latin. Ethiopic, Georgian, Coptic (a fragment), and Slavonic.

P'awstos Buzand [the author of a 5th-century *History* of 4th-century events] is the earliest writer who mentions the existence of this work. However, the first to clearly speak about and characterize Agat'angeghos' *History* is Ghazar P'arpets'i [late 5th century], according to whom this work was called the *Book of Grigoris*. Movses Xorenats'i also was well acquainted with Agat'angeghos' *History*, displaying familiarity not only with the presently-known edition, but also with that lost edition, from which the Syriac, Greek and Arab translations have reached us. Sebeos [7th century] also styles this work the *Book of Grigoris*.

The book also is mentioned by all subsequent Armenian historians, although the name *Book of Grigoris* has been forgotten and it is referred to as the *History* of Agat'angeghos.

The scholarly study of Agat'angeghos' *History* began already in the 18th century, when H. Stilling issued the text of its Greek translation along with a brief Latin translation in the series of Latin "Lives of the Saints" (*Acta Sanctorum*, Septembris, VIII, Antverpiae. 1762, p. 320-402). The first carefully executed publication of the Armenian text of *Agat'angeghos* (Venice, 1835), along with the development of Armenology as a discipline, served as stimuli which resulted in the publication of many studies (H. Anasyan, *Haykakan matenagitut'yun [Armenian Bibliography]* A. (Erevan, 1959) pp. 151-213). The Armenist V. Langlois, who translated *Agat'angeghos* into French (V. Langlois *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie*, I Paris) expressed the opinion that the author could not have lived in the 4th century, and could not have been a lay person, but was instead a 5th-century cleric. The publication of A. Von Gutschmid's article "Agat'angeghos" was a serious step forward (A. V. Gutschmid, "Agat'angeghos", *Zeit. d. Deutsch. Morg. Ges.*, BD XXXI, 1877, S. 1-60). He regarded the Armenian text of *Agat'angeghos* as the original, while the Greek text represented the translation. To him it was obvious that the author was a 5th-century cleric. Publication of the Greek *Agat'angeghos* as well as the 10th-century metaphrastic version by P. de Lagarde was another important step in the study of this question. [504] (*Agathangelus und die Akten Gregors von Armenien*, neu herausgegeben von Paul de Lagarde, Göttingen, 1887). B. Sargsean summarized the direction of the study of *Agat'angeghos* in his extensive monograph (*Agat'angeghos ew iwr bazmadarean gaghtnik'n [Agathangeghos and His Centuries-Long Secret]* (Venice, 1890).

H. Tashean observed that there are textual disparities between *Agat'angeghos* and [a version of it in] the 8th-century *Letter of Ge'ork the Assyrian*. He was convinced that the compiler of *Agat'angeghos* took from Koriwn['s *Life of Mashtots*'] rather than the other way round. The compiler also took from other sources (H. Tashean, *Agat'angeghos ar' Ge'orgay asori episkoposin* [*Agat'angeghos according to Ge'ork the Assyrian Bishop*], Vienna, 1891, p. 35). G. Ter-Mkrtch'ean found that Koriwn was the editor of *Agat'angeghos' History* (G. Ter-Mkrtch'yan, *Agat'angeghosi aghbyurnerits'* [*Agat'angeghos' Sources*] (Vagharshapat, 1896); while, according to N. Biwzandats'i, the 4th-century *Agat'angeghos*, which was written in Greek, was translated into Armenian in the 5th century by Koriwn (*Koriwn vardapet ew norin t'argmanut'iwnk* [*Koriwn Vardapet and His Translations*] (Tiflis, 1900), p. 14).

Thus, from historical, epic, and martyrological sources extant from the 4th century an Armenian cleric in the mid-5th century compiled the *Book of Grigori* (*Agat'angeghos' History*), which was seen and described by Ghazar P'arpets'i and others. This author (editor) belonged to the circle of Mesrop Mashtots' students.

From the standpoint of the dissemination of *Agat'angeghos' History*, the fact that it was translated from Greek had decisive significance, since it is clear that almost all foreign language editions derive from the Greek. Recently, G. Lafontaine published a critical edition of the Greek text, based on numerous manuscripts (*La version grecque ancienne du livre arménien d'Agathange*, édition critique par G. Lafontaine, Louvaine, 1973).

In the 10th century, when the well-known Foreword about the rebellion of Ardashir in the Greek *Agat'angeghos* already had been attached to the beginning of the work, Symeon Metaphrastes summarized the entire work and inserted it into his Greek *Lives of the Saints*. *Agat'angeghos* and its abbreviated metaphrastic edition spread throughout the medieval Christian world. From the Greek *Agat'angeghos* was translated the short Latin edition. Also from the Greek is the recently discovered abbreviated Greek *Life* (G. Lafontaine, "Une Vie grecque abrégée de St. Grégoire l'Illuminateur," *Le Muséon*, LXXXVI, 1-2, 1973). From the metaphrastic edition, translations were made into Georgian, Italian (17th century), and Slavonic. There also exists a Georgian fragment which was translated directly from the Armenian *Agat'angeghos*. G. Garitte discovered that an abbreviated Georgian translation of the *Teaching of Gregory* also has been preserved, which previously had been known under the title *On the Faith*. Up to this time, the work had been attributed to Hippolytus (G. Garitte, "Le traite géorgien 'Sur la foi' attribué à Hippolyte," *Le Muséon*, t. 78, 1-2 (1965), p. 119-172).

In any case, the Greek *Agat'angeghos* had the most translations into Arabic, from which group we have the full translation (A. Ter-Ghewondyan, *Agat'angeghosi arabakan nor xmbagrut'yune*" [*The New Arabic Edition of Agat'angeghos*] (Erevan, 1968). [505] According to G. Garitte, an abbreviated Arabic *Life* was translated from an intermediate Coptic text (G. Garitte, "Une Vie arabe de St. Gregoire d'Arménie," *Le Muséon*, LXV, 1-2, 1952).

In Lisbon at the beginning of the 20th century, Father E. Pareira published the abridged Ethiopic text of the *History of Gregory the Illuminator* (*Vida de S. Gregorio, patriarca da Armenia*, publ. por F. M. E. Pareira, Lisboa, 1903).

All the aforementioned editions, which are directly related to the Armenian text of *Agat'angeghos' History* which has reached us, constitute one group of editions.

There is still another group of editions whose Armenian texts have not been discovered, but currently we have at hand Syriac, Greek, and five Arabic translations (editions). In philology these are provisionally called *Lives*.

A radical upheaval in the study of *Agat'angeghos* was brought about in 1902 by N. Marr's discovery of a defective Arabic edition at the monastery of Saint Catherine, in Sinai. The complete manuscript of this edition was discovered much later and the missing section has since been published (A. Ter-Ghewondyan, *Agat'angeghosi arabakan xmbagrut'yan norahayt amboghjakan dzer'agire*" [The Newly Discovered Complete Text of the Arabic Edition of Agat'angeghos] (*Patmabanasirakan Handes* 1(1973). A study of the manuscript found by Marr made clear that the Armenian *Agat'angeghos* which has reached us is not the only Armenian-language text about Armenia's conversion in existence in the early Middle Ages. N. Marr correctly assumed that the Arabic edition he had discovered must have been translated from Greek which, in its turn, must descended from an Armenian text (Marr, pp. 162-163).

N. Marr's assumption was confirmed when G. Garitte published a newly discovered Greek edition in Escorial (Spain). The Arabic in certain sections was a translation of this Greek text. According to G. Garitte, the Greek must have been translated from Armenian (G. Garitte, *Documents pour l'é du livre d'Agathange*, Vatican, 1946).

In 1961 in Ohrid (Macedonia) a new Greek edition was discovered which, in its arrangement, is close to the group known as *Lives* (*La Vie grecque inédite de St. Grégoire d'Arménie*, *Analecta Bollandiana* 83, f. 3-4, 1965).

Recently, yet another new discovery has been published by M. van Esbroeck: an Arabic (Karshuni) *Life*, written in Syriac characters (M. van Esbroeck, *Un nouveau témoin du livre d'Agathange*, *REA*, VIII, Paris, 1971, pp. 13-167). After studying this manuscript, van Esbroeck concluded that its Syriac exemplar must have been translated from Armenian. The manuscript states that it was translated in 1178 by an Asori/Syriac scribe. And indeed, the Syriac exemplar was subsequently found and published (M. van Esbroeck, *La resumé syriaque de l'Agathange*, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 95, f. 3-4, 1977).

Considering data from the newly discovered multilingual editions of *Agat'angeghos*, [506] it is now possible to make the following conclusions. In the first half of the 5th century, an edition was put together whose Armenian text has not yet been discovered. However, from it Syriac, Greek, and Arabic editions were derived. These are called *Lives*. Apparently, this Armenian original, over the centuries, was forgotten. The edition known to us today was created in the mid-5th century, and is regarded as canonical by the Armenian Church, and throughout the entire Middle Ages it was used as a sacred book.

The first publication of *Agat'angeghos* took place in Constantinople in 1709. The Venice 1835 publication was made with the comparison of a few manuscripts. The critical edition of the text was published in 1909, prepared by G. Ter-Mkrtch'yan and S. Kanayan.

In the 19th century, *Agat'angeghos* was translated into Italian (*Storia di Agatangelo*. Versione italiana. Venezia, S. Lazzaro, 1843), French, Swedish, and English (S. C. Malan, *The Life and Times of S. Gregory the Illuminator* (London, 1868). Recently, Robert Thomson has translated into English the *Teaching* (*The Teaching of Saint Gregory. An Early Armenian Cathecism*, tr. by R. Thomson, Cambridge, Mass, 1970) and also the *History* (*Agathangelos, History of the Armenians*, trans. and comment. by R. W. Thomson (Albany, N.Y., 1976).

The present Modern Armenian translation was first published in 1977 (*Sovetakan grogh* series, A. Abrahamyan and V. Ar'akelyan, editors) and it was the *History* portion only. As for the Modern Armenian translation of the *Teaching*, it appeared first in the journal *Ejmiatsin* (1978 4,6,7; 1979 2,5,6).

A Note on Pagination

The printed editions of these online texts show the page number at the top of the page. In the right margin the pagination of the Classical Armenian (*grabar*) text also is provided. We have made the following alterations for the online texts: the page number of the printed English editions (*Sources of the Armenian Tradition* series) appears in square brackets, in the text. For example [101] this text would be located on page 101, and [102] this text would be on page 102. The *grabar* pagination is as follows. This sentence corresponds to the information found on page 91 of the Classical Armenian text [g91] and what follows is on page 92. In other words, the Classical Armenian text delimiters [gnn] indicate **bottom** of page.

Transliteration

The transliteration used here is a modification of the Library of Congress system for Armenian, substituting **x** for the LOC's **kh**, for the thirteenth character of the Armenian alphabet (խ). Otherwise we follow the LOC transliteration, which eliminates diacritical marks above or below a character, and substitutes single or double quotation marks to the character's right. In the LOC romanization, the seventh character of the alphabet (ե) appears as **e'**, the eighth (ը) as **e''**, the twenty-eighth (ռ) as **r'**, and the thirty-eighth (օ), as **o'**.

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Long Branch, New Jersey, 2022

Selections from

Agat'angeghos'

History of the Armenians

The Life and History of Saint Gregory

Translated from Classical Armenian
by Robert Bedrosian

Classical Armenian text at Internet Archive: [18](#).

18. During the time of the decline of the kingdom of the Parthians, sovereignty was taken from [the last Parthian king] Vagharsh's son, Artawan. [The latter] was killed by Artashir, son of Sasan, who was a certain *naxarar* (lord) from the district of Stahr. [Artashir] had come and united the troops of the Persians who had abandoned, rejected, and disrespected the lordship of the Parthians, and enthusiastically accepted the rule of Artashir, son of Sasan. Now it happened that after the death, when the sad news reached Xosrov, king of the Armenians—who was second [in command] of the lordship of the Persians (since whoever the Armenian king might be was second in the Persian kingdom)—although [Xosrov] had learned early about the misfortune, he was unable to adequately prepare for military action. Thereafter again he experienced great sorrow, since he had not managed to do anything and because of the way things had gone, he turned back and unhappily came to his own land [**end of *grabar*** (Classical Armenian) text page 21; henceforth shown as, for example, g21].

19. Now at the beginning of the next year, Xosrov, king of the Armenians, began gathering brigades and constituting an army. He assembled troops from the Aghuans and Iberians/Georgians. He opened the Gate of the Alans and the Choray pass, bringing in troops of the Huns to raid the Persian areas and to invade the Asorestan areas, as far as the gates of Ctesiphon. He looted the entire country, wrecking flourishing cities and desirable *awans* (hamlets), and leaving the entire cultivated country empty and ruined. He attempted to completely wipe out, seize, and demolish everything from top to bottom, aiming to end the lordship of the Persians. With a great grudge he vowed to exact vengeance on those who had deposed from power his own [Arsacid] kinsmen. Inflamed with his grudge, he wanted full vengeance. He greatly inflated himself, putting his faith in the multitude of his forces and the bravery of the troops. There quickly arrived as support a vast multitude of vigorous and courageous organized men and horsemen from the Aghuank', Lp'ink', Chighpk', and Kaspk', and others from those parts, [arriving] to seek vengeance for the blood of Artawan.

20. [King Xosrov] was greatly saddened that his own clansmen, his kinfolk, had submitted to serving [g22] and supporting the rising kingship of the Stahrte [Sasanian] and had united with him [Artashir]. Moreover, Xosrov had sent emissaries for [the Persians] to come forth to aid their own [Arsacid] clansmen and to oppose his [Artashir's] kingship. He also sent [emissaries] to the brave folk and martial warriors there in the Kushan areas and in [the Kushans'] own native land for them to come to his aid. However, despite [these actions] the clans, and the *azgapetk'*, the *naxarars* and *nahapetk'* of the Parthians paid no attention [to Xosrov's requests]. This was because they had united with, accepted, and submitted to the lordship of Artashir, instead of supporting the lordship of their own [Arsacid] clan and its brotherhood.

21. Nonetheless, Xosrov took the multitude of his troops, as well as those who had come from various places to support him as comrades in warfare. Now when the king of the Persians saw the mob of brigades coming against him with great force, he arose and went before them in military preparedness. However, he was unable to withstand, and fled before them. [Xosrov and his allies] pursued and destroyed all the troops of the Persians, covering the plains and roads with their scattered corpses, and delivering devastating and incredible blows [g23]. The king of the Armenians turned back from this great destruction triumphantly, with much booty, and joyfully elated. He went to the district of Ayrarat in the lands of the Armenians, to the city of Vagharshapat, with great joy, good renown, and much booty.

22. Then [King Xosrov] ordered that emissaries should be dispatched to various places. He issued edicts that pilgrimage should be undertaken to the seven altars of the temples, to worship the images of the gods. He exalted the places of the patrimonial worship of his Arsacid clan with white bulls and white rams, white horses and white mules, with gold and silver ornaments, with fringed and tasseled silks, with gold crowns and silver items for making sacrifice, precious vessels of gold and silver studded with gems, and beautifully adorned brilliant raiment. He also took a fifth of the grandest of all the loot he had amassed and gifted the most magnificent items to the priests. As for the troops who were with him, he gave them gifts and dismissed them.

23. Now at the start of the next year, [King Xosrov] assembled an extremely large number of troops, the same he had summoned previously and many more, and spread about raiding the Asorestan areas. [He did this] especially since [g24] troops of the Tachiks [Arabs] had come to his aid. After looting the entire country, they valiantly returned to their own places. And so for 11 years, one year after the next, they looted and wrecked all the confines of the country under the kingship and rule of the Persians.

24. Now when the king of the Persians saw all these evils which had descended upon him, he became upset and was plunged into anxiety, doubt, and hesitation. He summoned to himself all the kings, lieutenants (*kusakals*), lords, generals, chiefs (*pets*), and princes of his realm. They entered into deliberations [and King Ardashir] beseeched all of them to find some solutions, and [he] offered various gifts. He said that if only someone could be found to exact vengeance, he would promise to give him the second position (*gah*, "throne," "seat") in his realm, if only someone would undertake to seek vengeance for the great grudge that he held, "I would be above him [in rank] only by [reason of] my throne, regardless if [the avenger] should derive from a undistinguished or a distinguished [origin]." He promised as a reward to confer various kinds of honors and gifts.

25. Now among the advisors there was a senior *nahapet* of the kingdom of the Parthians, whose [g25] name was Anak. Rising to his feet, [Anak] promised to take revenge on his own [Arsacid] clansman, as though on an enemy.

26. [King Ardashir] began talking to him and said: "If you just resolve this matter loyally, I will return to you your native Parthian land, your own Pahlaw property. Moreover, I will glorify you by putting a crown on your head and making you prominent and glorious in my realm. And I will designate you as the second to me [in rank]."

27. The Parthian [Anak] replied: "Support the remainder of my clan while my true (*harazat*) brother and I will leave you today [for Armenia]."

28. Then the Parthian along with his brother organized with their families, women, and children, and all their belongings. They set out, watching the roads, arising and departing as though emigrating to the Armenian areas, as though they had revolted against the king of the Persians. They came to King Xosrov in the district of Uti, in the city of Xaghxagh, the winter residence of the Armenian monarchy.

29. As soon as the king of the Armenians saw this, he delightedly went before him, receiving him with great joy, especially since [Anak] began speaking with him falsely and deceitfully [g26], demonstrating the believability of his arrival. [Anak] said: "It was for this reason that I came to you, so that we might share in exacting vengeance."

Classical Armenian text: [30. ff.](#)

30. Now when the king saw this man who had come to him with his entire family, he regarded him as trustworthy and believed him. Then he gave him an honor [or, "diadem," *patiw*] of a royal kind and seated him on the second throne of the realm by rank. They joyously passed the entire period of winter, those cold days of blustery winds and ice.

31. The king arose and left those areas when the warm days of the southern winds arrived to open the gates of spring. [The royal retinue] came and descended into the district of Ayrarat, going to the city of Vagharshapat. While they were happily resting, the king decided to muster troops, with the aim of invading Persia again.

32. As soon as the Parthian [Anak] heard this, he recalled the oath of the compact he had made with the king of the Persians. He also remembered the promises of gifts, and he longed for his native land called Pahlaw. And then he hatched an evil scheme. He and his brother took the king aside—as though for some recreation, as though he wanted to deliberate with him on some matter. They had their steel swords [g27] partly unsheathed. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, they raised their weapons and struck the king dead. He fell to the ground, a corpse. Once these events became known, the crowd raised a lament. However, [the killers] by then had each mounted his horse and fled.

33. When the *naxarars* of the Armenian troops learned about this, they split into brigades and went in pursuit. Some hurried by land and reached the head of the bridge near the gates of the city of Artashat. The Arax River, which had risen up, coursed along swollen with blocks of ice and mounds of melting snow in these days of its flooding. Half [of the pursuers] crossed the bridge of the city of Vagharshapat, which is called Metsamo'r bridge, hurrying to get in advance of [the fugitives] at the head of the Artashat bridge. In a narrow part of the road, [the *naxarars*] stopped them, and surrounded them. They hurled [the fugitives] into the river from the Tap'erakan bridge. And then they turned back sighing, crying out, and lamenting, and the entire country gathered and mourned the king.

34. Now [King Xosrov], before the warm spirit [of life] had quit his bosom, before he had breathed his last, issued an order that the clan [of Anak] should be exterminated. Then [the *naxarars*] began to kill and destroy, not [g28] sparing even the young who still did not know their right hand from their left. Similarly, the female [side of the] clan was put to their swords. Only two small children of [Anak] the Parthian were spirited away by someone and saved by means of their *dayeaks* ["nurses/tutors/guardians"], one [fleeing] to the Persian areas, and the other, to the Greek [Byzantine] areas.

35. When the king of the Persians heard about all this, he was delighted and rejoiced. On that day he celebrated a great feast and carried out many vows to the fire-temples. [King Ardashir] assembled troops and

advanced, raiding throughout the areas of the Armenian land. He led into captivity people and animals, the elderly and infants, youths and children alike.

36. It happened that someone took and saved from that raid one of the children of Xosrov, king of the Armenians. This was a small child named Trdat, who was taken by *dayeaks* and escaped to the court of the emperor in Greek territory. Thereafter the king of the Persians came to the country of the Armenians, [re]naming places after his own name and putting to flight the Greek troops, chasing them to the borders of Greece [*i.e.*, to Byzantine territory in western Asia Minor]. Digging trenches, [the Persians] established the [new] borders, naming the place formerly called Soyzn ["the Pit"], the "Gate of Trenches." [The king] had other people [g29] led to their [Persian] country, and he seized that [Armenian] land for himself.

37. Now Trdat [Trdate's/Tiridates] went and was nourished and educated by a certain count, who was named Licinius [Likiane's]. Meanwhile [Gregory], the son of [Anak] the Parthian, who had gone to the Byzantine areas, was nourished and educated in the city of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Someone close to him had him raised by *dayeaks* in the fear of Christ and, additionally, he was schooled in the details of Christian learning, becoming familiar with the scriptures of God and the fear of the Lord. His name was Gregory [Grigorios]. As soon as he had been informed by the *dayeaks* about the deeds done by his father, [Gregory] arose and went to Trdat [Trdatios] to perform voluntary service. He hid his identity and other facts [about himself] concerning who he was, where he had come from, how, and why. He obediently gave himself into [Trdat's] service and worked for him.

38. In that period, the prince of the Byzantines was persecuting the church of God. As soon as Trdat realized that Gregory was a member of the Christian faith, he began to scold and threaten him with various punishments. Often he harassed [Gregory] with torments in prison and in fetters so that he would abandon the worship of Christ and, obediently [g30], turn to the vain and loathsome worship of the gods.

39. It happened that in those same days the prince of the Goths mustered troops and, with numerous brigades of soldiers, came to do battle against the prince of the Byzantines. [The ruler of the Goths] sent a message with the following import: "Why should we arise to do battle in such numbers, waste our troops, and bring danger and crisis to our lands? Behold, I will come forth to you as a [single combatant] champion from my own forces here, and you [as an individual should] come against me from the Byzantine troops. We will go to a place of battle. Should I conquer you, the Byzantines then will submit to me in service. On the other hand, if you defeat me, our lives shall be subject to you and we shall obey you. Thus, without shedding blood and causing destruction, prosperity will embrace both sides."

40. When the king of the Byzantines heard all this, he was frightened—because [the Goths] were unwilling to fight brigade against brigade in a normal fashion. Nor was he able to agree to the proposal in the message, because he was weak, [since] his bones lacked strength [to prevail in single combat]. He was depressed and terrified because he did not know how to respond to the proposal.

41. Then the king commanded that edicts and emissaries should be sent to the princes [g31] and troops of his realm wherever they might be, that they should come to him immediately. The princes, troops, and *naxarars* quickly arrived by him. Licinius took the main brigade, which was under his command and hastened to the place of battle near the king, and Trdat was with him.

42. While the brigades of troops were arriving, they happened to enter a narrow spot leading to the city gates. [This area] was [located] amidst the ditches of vineyards and the paths of storehouses. However, the city gates were closed since it was midnight. As it was the middle of the night, they did not find any forage for the horses of the large army. Looking around, they noticed that there was a haystack in an ox-stall inside the city wall. They could not get their hands on it because of the wall's height. It was then that Trdat climbed over the wall, descended, and threw back among the troops piles [of hay], until there was enough. He also [took the

forage's] guards and many [guard] dogs, [and] lowered [them] down among the troops on the other side of the wall. Then he himself again ascended [the wall] and descended.

43. When Licinius observed such a demonstration of strength, he was astonished. When day dawned, the gates of the city were opened and all the troops entered [g32]. Licinius went before the king, all the grandees, commanders-in-chiefs (*sparapetk'n*), commanders of the troops, and princes.

44. The king related to the princes the entire message of the king of the Goths. Then Licinius spoke to the king, saying: "Let the heart of my lord not be fearful at all. For here, in your court, there is a man who can deal with this matter. His name is Tiridates, and he is from the clan of the king of the land of the Armenians." Then [Licinius] narrated [Trdat's] acts of bravery done during the evening. Then he gave a command and they brought Tiridates into the king's presence and told him everything in order. After that they set an hour for holding the fight—in the morning [the two combatants] would battle each other.

45. The next morning at dawn [the king] ordered that the [royal] purple [garment] should be put on [Trdat]. Thus did they clothe Tiridates with the imperial adornment and place on him the royal symbol. No one knew [the truth] about him, and an order went out to everyone that this was indeed the emperor (*kaysr*) himself. [Trdat] took a brigade of many troops and, to the sound of the trumpet, advanced rapidly until he was opposite the enemies. Then [Trdat], the man dressed like the emperor, and the [Goth] king whipped the flanks of their horses and reached each other. It was there [g33] that the man dressed like the emperor defeated the king. Arresting him, he led him before the emperor.

46. Then the king greatly exalted Tiridates and gave him very grand gifts. He placed a crown on his head exalting, adorning, and beautifying him with purple and imperial ornaments. [The Byzantine emperor] assembled many troops and gave them to him to aid him, and then sent him to his own land, Armenia.

47. After the triumphant combat with its display of bravery, King Trdat of Greater Armenia returned from the Byzantine areas. When the king arrived in the Armenian areas, he found many Persian troops there, since they had conquered that land and put it into subjection. He killed many of them and put many others to flight back to the Persian areas. He conquered his patrimonial lordship, making it his own, and strengthened its borders.

48. In the first year of Trdat[']s reign] over the kingdom of Greater Armenia, [his retinue] went to the Ekegheats' district [Akilisene] to the village of E'rez, to the temple of Anahit, in order to offer sacrifices there. Once they had performed this unworthy deed, they descended and encamped by the banks of the river called Gayl [Wolf].

49. When they had entered a tent there and [g34] were eating and had drunk well of the wine, the king ordered Gregory to place wreaths and thick tree branches as gifts on the altar of Anahit's idol. However, [Gregory] did not agree to participate in the worship of the gods.

50. Then the king began to talk to Gregory, saying: "How dare you worship that God Whom I do not worship—especially since you, a stranger and a foreigner, came and attached yourself to us?" And [the king] ordered that [Gregory] be held for that day. The following morning he gave an order and they brought Gregory before the king.

51. The king began to speak with Gregory, saying: "All these years that I have known you, you have served me single-mindedly with all your power. I was satisfied with your labors and intended to reward you. Why do you not do my will?"

Classical Armenian text: [52. ff.](#)

52. [Gregory's Christian reply, g35. Not translated.]

53. [King Trdat threatens to jail and torture Gregory...] "if you do not agree to offer worship to the gods, especially to the great lady Anahit, who is the glory (*p'ar'k'*) and support of our people, whom all kings revere, especially the king of the Greeks. She is the mother of all wisdom, benefactor of all humanity, and offspring of the great brave Aramazd" [g36].

54-58. [Gregory's refutation, g36-g37. Not translated.]

59. [Gregory also says:] "As for Anahit, the one you call the great lady, there may at some time have been such a person. For the idolators, through witchcraft and different kinds of diabolical illusions, convinced the people of that period to build temples, erect idols, and worship them. But they are nothing, unable to do anyone either good or evil. They cannot honor their worshippers nor disrespect their enemies. You worship them in delusion with your mind enraptured. Instead of God—whose goodness you enjoy—you worship [idols] made of wood, stone, gold, and silver, [things] which God established for the service, needs, and glory of humankind" [g38].

60.-98. [Gregory preaches while hanging upside down as a torture, g38-g61. Not translated.]

99. While [Gregory] was thus hanging, the scribes of the court [g61] wrote down [what he was saying]...and he said many other things while hanging thus upside down and [the scribes] wrote it down and then presented [the account] before the king [g62].

Classical Armenian text: [99. ff.](#)

99.-120. The various tortures that Gregory endures, g62-g70. Not translated.]

121. ...there came forward one of the *naxarars* whose name was Tachat, son-in-law of Artawan, the king's *sparapet* (commander-in-chief of the army). He began to speak, providing [previously undisclosed] information about [Gregory] and saying: "Because he is unworthy of life, he has no will to live and see the light. All this time that he has dwelled among us, we did not recognize him. He is the son of the guilty Anak, who killed your father, Xosrov, and who darkened this land of Armenia, and betrayed this land to ruin and captivity. Now it is not fitting for him to live, since he is the son of a guilty man."

Classical Armenian text: [122. ff.](#)

122. ...when this additional [information] was revealed to the king—that indeed [Gregory] was the son [g70] of Anak the Parthian, who had slain his father Xosrov, [the king] ordered that he be bound hand and foot and neck, and taken to the district of Ayrarat and placed in a dungeon in the fortress of the city of Artashat, lowered down into the lowest pit which was unbelievably deep, until he died there. And [Gregory] was in that pit for 13 years. As for the king, he went to his wintering place in the district of Ayrarat, to the city of Vagharshapat, in the eastern part of the land of the Armenians.

123. Now King Trdat, for the entire tenure of his reign, was destroying and ruining the country of the Persian kingdom and the land of Asorestan—wrecking it and subjecting it to incredible blows. It is for this reason that such deeds merited expression among the ranks of those reciting proverbs, that "Like the arrogant Trdat, who pridefully destroyed the dykes of rivers and arrogantly dried up the currents of seas." His haughtiness even extended to his clothing. [Trdat] was possessed of great strength, solid bones, and a large frame. He was brave and an incredible warrior, tall and broad of stature. Throughout his entire life he made war and was triumphant. He received a great renown for bravery, and the grand splendor [g71] of his victories resounded throughout the entire world. He struck at enemies and sought vengeance for his ancestors. He took much

booty from the Syrian areas and acquired an unbelievable amount of loot from them. He put to the sword Persian troops and took an incredible quantity of plunder from them. He became the leader of the Greek cavalry forces and gave the [captured] camps [of the Persians] over to them. He removed [or, brought forth] extremely large numbers of the troops of the Huns, and seized Persian areas.

124. Now there was a widow who lived in that fortress wherein Grigorios was [imprisoned] for 13 years in the deep pit. [The woman] had received a command in a dream that every day she was to throw into that deep pit a loaf of bread which she was to prepare. In such a way was [Gregory] nourished by the command of God during the years that he was there. In that pit which they had thrown him into [Gregory] was preserved alive by the grace of his Lord. As for [other] men who had been let down there, all had died due to the horribly foul air in the place, the muddy slime, the snakes inhabiting it, and the depth. Indeed, that place had been constructed [specifically] for criminals, for killing those condemned to death in all of Armenia.

125. After this, King Trdat ordered [g72] that an edict should be promulgated throughout all the lands of his realm. It had this import:

126. "Trdat, king of Greater Armenia, [sends] greetings to everyone—to the grandees, princes, *naxarars* (lords), officials, and others under my authority [and to those who are located] in hamlets, *shens*, (cultivated areas), villages, and farms (*agaraks*), to the *azats* (gentry) and *shinakans* (peasantry).

127. By the aid of the gods, may greeting and prosperity come to you and to the entire land of the Armenians, full fertility from manly Aramazd, protection from the lady Anahit, bravery from the brave Vahagn. May the wisdom of the Greeks reach to the estates (*dastakert*) of the Caesars [?], may we receive protection from our demigod Parthians, and from the glory of [our] kings and brave ancestors.

128. "Let everyone know from the orders we have sent to you, that we are concerned for your prosperity. For when we were in the land of the Greeks [Byzantines], we observed the concern of the kings to care about the prosperity of their land, to honor the altars of the gods with buildings and sacrifices of victims, and noteworthy gifts of offerings, and differing sorts of gifts and presents and with the choicest of fruits [g73] offered to them. [We observed also] the zeal of their worship, how they worshipped and exalted the noteworthy, magnificent, and uncreated gods with wealth and adornments. Furthermore, we noticed how they received as compensation from them peaceful and populous prosperity, abundance, fertility, and how they enjoyed every sort of goodness, splendor, and peace.

129. "For this, the kings of that land, by their commands, [intentionally] frightened the people so that they would increase their worship of the gods. A stern command was issued by the kings so that the populous common crowd of folk, in their ignorance, would not scorn [religious observances], or that someone suddenly would not dare to insult the worship of the gods. [The command] ordered the princes in their own activities to root out and remove [such people] so that the land's prosperity would be increased by the gods. Moreover, should anyone suddenly slight the gods, the great wrath of the gods should fall upon such an individual. Such people would destroy themselves and bring disastrous ruin on the land from them [from the gods]. Thus it was for this reason that the kings of the Greeks in their land issued such severe orders threatening death [g74].

130. "Now we also want to give a command that will concern itself with your prosperity, increased by the gods for you, in all complete goodness. We command that you [perform] worship, and glorify [the gods] and they [in return will deliver] prosperity, abundance, and peace. Just as every

householder (*tanute'r*) cares for his own *tun* and his family, so do we, likewise, care for the prosperity of our land of Armenia.

131. "Now, worship the gods all you *naxarars*, grandees (*metsamets*), *azats*, and workers (*gortsakalk'*), and those beloved of our Arsacid kings, the peasants (*shinakank'*), residents (*bnakk'*), *dzer'atunkk'* [?] and *dzer'asunk'* [?], whom we have provided for, nourished, cared for, and advanced, thinking to benefit our common good. Now should it happen that suddenly some person should be found disrespecting the gods, should they be discovered, let them be bound hand, foot, and neck and brought to the royal court. Moreover, let all [the following items] go [as a reward] to whomever uncovers them: their *tun*, sustenance/livelihood (*keank'*), their goods and belongings and valuables (*gandzk'*). Be well with the aid of the gods and our kings all of you who abide by this command. May you all dwell in prosperity, as indeed we are well."

132. Now throughout all the years of his reign, King Trdat attacked the Persian [g75] dominion, seeking vengeance through warfare. In the course of the years that Grigorios was in the pit—some 13 years—Trdat waged intense warfare against the Persian kingdom, for all the days of his life.

133. [King Trdat] ordered that yet another edict be written [and promulgated] throughout the lands and districts of his realm. It had this content:

134. "Trdatios, king of Greater Armenia, to the lands, districts, *naxarars*, troops, *shinakans*, to all, greetings. Be well, as we ourselves are well.

135. "You yourselves know that it was by the aid of the gods that victory and peace were granted to us—from the beginning, from the days of our ancestors, and that [it was by the aid of the gods that] all peoples were conquered and kept in obedience. Yet when we were not able to please the gods through worship or to soften their will toward us, in their anger they rejected and removed us from our great lordship. Now especially as regards the sect of Christians, we are ordering you—whether it happens that such [folk] be found in their thousands or tens of thousands—because they constitute an impossible obstacle to the worship of the gods, [we command that] should such [Christians] be discovered, they immediately should be exposed. Gifts and honors will be bestowed upon those [g76] who uncover them. But should anyone not reveal such [Christians], or hide them and it be found out, then those individuals should be considered among those condemned to death, and brought to the court to be put to death, while their houses will be given to the court.

136. "Now, as an example, I did not spare my meritorious Grigorios, someone who was dear to me. For similar causes, I have tortured [him] with harsh and severe punishments. Afterwards, I had him thrown into the incredibly deep pit, where he immediately became food for snakes. Because of my love for and awe of the gods, I considered as nothing his great merit. You should have this [same level of] awe and fear of death. May you dwell under the protection of the gods, and from us find goodness. Be well, and we ourselves are well."

137. Now it happened in that period that the emperor Diocletian was seeking a wife. Throughout all parts of his realm he dispatched painters able to paint accurate portraits. They would accurately depict the beauty of the [woman's] face and mascaraed eyebrows with appropriate colors, painting [the likeness] on tablets to display before the king for his pleasure.

138. At that time [the portrait-painters] came to Rome and found a convent of virgins [g77] who, having isolated themselves in the mountains, practised vegetarianism, abstinence, and modesty. These saintly women of the Christian faith made their prayers to God On High with glory and blessing, day and night, constantly

and worthily. The name of their head was Gayiane', and her protégé (*san*, "tutee") was named Hr'ip'sime'. [Hr'ip'sime'] was one of the daughters of someone from a pious and royal line.

139. As soon as [the painters] arrived [at the convent], they forcibly entered the holy dwelling of the virtuous [women]. Seeing the modest beauty of Hr'ip'sime', they were astounded and transported by her wonderful looks. Capturing her likeness on their tablets, they sent it to the emperor.

140. When the emperor saw the stunning beauty of Hr'ip'sime's portrait, he was filled with a crazed passion, since his extraordinary desire propelled him to lust. [As a result], he specified a time for the joyous wedding, hurrying fervently to accomplish the happy marriage celebration. Compelled by this urgency, [Emperor Diocletian] sent emissaries and heralds throughout all lands, so that all might provide valuable gifts to the grand wedding and [g78] come with great joy to perform the marriage of the royal bridegroom according to royal custom.

Classical Armenian text: [141. ff.](#)

141.-148. [The prayers of the ascetic women, pp. g79-g82. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [149. ff.](#)

149. Afterwards the blessed Gayiane' with her protégée Hr'ip'sime' and their chaste companions set out, fleeing so that they might keep themselves unsullied...[g83].

150. Then they reached the country of the Armenians, arriving in the district of Ayarat at the city of Vagharshapat, also known as Norak'aghak ("New City"), the seat of the kings of the Armenians. Thereafter, they came and entered the wine press of the vineyard which [structures] had been built on the northeastern side. Using their funds, they ate by buying from the shops in the city, but had no other source of income, except that one of them was skilled in glass-working—making glass beads—whose [sale] price was given in exchange for their daily food and provisions.

151. In this period there was no small amount of disturbance in the land of the Greeks [g84], as messengers were sent to various places and investigations were conducted, so that, perhaps, [the women] might be found somewhere. Then the emissaries reached Trdat, king of Greater Armenia, coming into the king's presence in the city of Vagharshapat. When [an emissary] delivered the edict, [King Trdat] took it from his hand with joy. The edict's contents were these:

153.-154. [Diocletian warns Trdat about Christians and the dangers they pose to society, g85-g86. Not translated.]

155-156. [In a second letter, Trdat is informed about the flight to Armenia of beautiful Hr'ip'sime' and his help is asked for catching and returning her. Strangely, Diocletian adds: "Yet should the beauty of her looks please you, then keep her for yourself," g87. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [157. ff.](#)

157. As soon as they read the letter with the edict's instructions, the king ordered—with great sternness—that they should search everywhere in his realm, investigating with care. He quickly dispatched emissaries everywhere to find and quickly bring forth [the fugitive women] wherever they might be. And [King Trdat] promised very great gifts to whomever should find them.

158. While this hunt was going on throughout the regions of the land of the Armenians, those blessed martyrs had come and hidden themselves at the royal seat, in the very city of Vagharshapat. After a few days, they

were quickly discovered through searching [g87].

159-160. [It was proper that they should be found, since Truth should not be concealed, pp. g87-g88. Biblical quotations. Not translated.]

161. It happened that they were discovered in the buildings of the wine press. For there had been no small amount of disturbance inside the land of the Armenians, beginning with the arrival of the commanding edicts from the great emperor of the Greeks to Trdat, king of Greater Armenia [g88] [which included] guarding all the passes of the roads and avenues in all districts. Scouts went to all parts to investigate. When someone saw [the women], that person informed about them.

162. Now when matters became known [about the women], for two days they were kept where they had been discovered, by a legion of infantry. After two [or, three] days, the renown of the modest Hr'ip'sime' and her remarkable beauty became publicly known. Then the astonishment increased, as every man related it to the next.

163. In order to glimpse her beauty, a great and disorderly crowd gathered. *Naxarars* (lords) and grandees of the nobility all rushed to see, climbing over one another. The *azats* (gentry) and the rough and tumble mob jostled each other, led on by the debauched lust and lewdness of their pagan customs.

164. Now as soon as the blessed ones knew about the evil intentions of these stupid and depraved men, with loud bewailing, tears, and hands upraised to Heaven in prayers, [the women] sought salvation from the Almighty Lord, Who previously had saved them from the impious corruption [g89] of the wicked and lewd pagans. [The women prayed] that [God] grant them [again] that same victory in battle and illumination of faith. Covering their faces, they fell on the ground in shame at the lewd viewers who had gathered to look.

165. After this, many of the viewers who had come out to see her beauty—viewers who were the king's intimates—came into the king's presence and informed him. Early the very next day, before dawn, a command was issued by the king that the blessed Hr'ip'sime' should be brought to the court, while saint Gayiane' should be kept there in company with her chaste companions.

166. Immediately they sent a gold sedan chair with attendants to the door of the wine press, outside the city, where their retreat was located. They also presented [to Hr'ip'sime'] from the court, beautiful, soft, shining garments and distinguished ornaments, so that she would adorn herself and with splendor and honor enter the city and go into the king's presence. For [King Trdat] had not yet beheld her. Based on what they had told him about her beauty, [the king] planned to take her as his wife.

Classical Armenian text: [167. ff.](#)

167. When the blessed Gayiane' saw this, she began to talk with her protégé as follows: [g90]...

168,-172. [The prayers of Hr'ip'sime', g91-g93. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [173. ff.](#)

173. Now when all this had taken place, the multitude of people and the press of the crowd increased. Many servants from the royal court had come to convey her to the court, and *naxarars* (lords) and the grandee nobility were there to pay her homage, collect her, and accompany [g93] her to court. For they were taking her to marry King Trdat and to become the queen of the Armenians.

174. [The Hr'ip'sime'ans pray that the marriage will not occur, g94. Not translated.]

175. [After strong thundering, a voice speaks from heaven, urging them to be strong, g95. Not translated.]

176. And so it thundered for a long while, until people were dazed from it and in awe. Many horses, frightened by the surging multitude, threw their riders to the ground, and [many of the riders] were trampled under foot and perished. Similarly people, as they mobbed here and there, trampled one another and perished. Many were broken and there was the sound of [g95] clamor and lamenting at the unbelievable evils and fears that had descended upon people. Many died, and such an amount of blood was shed that it watered the ground. Now when this confusion arose from the press of the multitude of people, some [folk] who were of the grandee servitors of the court hurried from there to inform the king of all that had been said, since secretaries (*nshanagirk'*) happened to be there, who wrote down all that was said and read [the accounts] in the king's presence.

177. Then the king said: "Since she did not want to come voluntarily and in splendid honor, let them forcibly bring her to my palace and bring her into the royal chamber [g96]."

178.-179. [Prayers of Hr'ip'sime' as she is forcibly being taken to the palace, g97-g98. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [180. ff.](#)

180. Now while the blessed Hr'ip'sime' was offering up all these prayers to God, King Trdat came and entered the chamber where they had her confined. As he was going in, all the people—some outside the palace, others in the streets—began to sing and dance, jumping up and running. Some were making merry in the fortress, others, in the city's center. All of them were getting ready to perform the wedding dances, and the dance called *kak'aw*. [God looks down and strengthens Hr'ip'sime', g98. Not translated].

181. The king entered the room and seized her, in order to work his lustful desire. [Hr'ip'sime'] strengthened by the Holy Spirit [g98], battled like a beast and fought like a man. They fought starting with the third hour and continuing until the tenth hour. The king was defeated—he, whose strength had been regarded as unbelievable. While in the land of the Greeks, he had displayed such strength and stamina, that everyone was astonished. Moreover, even within [his own] kingdom, when he had returned to his native patrimony, he also had shown many deeds of manly valor there. And now he—so renowned in everything—was defeated and worsted by a single girl, by the will and power of Christ.

182. Now [King Trdat], once he had been defeated, tired, and weakened, went out and, putting a collar around her neck, had the blessed Gayiane' led to the door of the chamber. Then he himself went back into the room. He told the servants to force the defiant Gayiane' to speak to Hr'ip'sime' through the door [and to say]: "Do his will so that you and I shall live."

183. [Gayiane'] agreed to speak with her protégé. She approached the door of the chamber and said to Hr'ip'sime' who was inside: ...[Gayiane' urges Hr'ip'sime' to be strong and resist, with Christ's help, g99. Not translated.]

184. When they realized what kind of advice [Gayiane'] was giving, they brought rocks and struck her mouth with them until her teeth fell out, and [they tried to] force her to tell [Hr'ip'sime'] to do the king's will.

185-188. [Gayiane' urges Hr'ip'sime' to be strong, g100-g102. Not translated.]

189. Now saint Gayiane' had said all this in the language of the Romans, speaking at the door to her protégé, while the king was struggling with saint Hr'ip'sime'. There were some present among the servants of the court who heard [and understood] everything [which had been said] in the language of the Romans.

Classical Armenian text: [190. ff.](#)

190. When they heard all that Gayiane' was saying to her protégé, they removed her from the door. Although they frequently struck her and hit her face with stones, and knocked her teeth out, and broke her jaws, still she did not deviate a single word in what she was saying to the girl. Rather, she redoubled [her efforts] in the same tenor, using the very same words as before.

191. Meanwhile [Hr'ip'sime'] was still fighting with [King Trdat] from the tenth [g102] hour of the day until the first watch of the evening, and she defeated him. The girl was fortified by the Holy Spirit. She hit, chased, exhausted, and defeated the king, who fell to the ground. She also stripped the clothes off the king, ripped his robe, tossed aside his crown and left him covered with shame. Even though [Hr'ip'sime's] own clothes had been torn to shreds by him, she emerged from there, triumphantly retaining her sanctity.

192. Forcibly opening the doors of the dwelling, she came outside, cutting through the crowd of people. Nor could anyone subdue her. She went through the midst of the city, going up through the eastern side, through the Sun (*Areg*) gate of the city. She went to the wine press where their former retreat had been, and told the glad tidings to her companions. Then she went a long distance from the city, to the northeast, to a sandy elevated area close to the main thoroughfare which went on to Artashat city.

193. When she reached that spot, she went down on her knees and prayed [g103]. [The prayers of Hr'ip'sime', entries 193.-196. (g103-g105). Not translated.]

197. While the blessed saint [g105] Hr'ip'sime' was saying all this, the king's princes suddenly arrived, that very night. [They were] the chief executioner along with torturers, with blazing torches before them. Coming up quickly, they bound her hands behind her and tried to cut out her tongue. She willingly opened her mouth and stuck out her tongue, offering it to them.

198-201. [Hr'ip'sime' is tortured to death and 32 of her followers are executed. Their corpses are left as food for beasts and birds, g106-g107. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [202. ff.](#)

202. Now the king put aside his humiliation for which he should have felt shame [g107], he who had been so renowned for bravely fighting battles, he who in the Greek Olympics had appeared to have a giant's strength and displayed and wrought many deeds of valor, he who had fought no few battles beyond the Euphrates River in the regions of the Tachiks [Arabs]. [This man, who, on one occasion] had been gravely wounded and so left off fighting, had mounted a horse and [arriving at the banks of the Euphrates], had picked up the horse and its armor, and his own armor, tied them to his back, and then swam across the Euphrates River. The great warrior, King Trdat, was defeated by a girl, by the will of God... [g108]...

203. [King Trdat remarks]:..."I well know the land of the Greeks and Romans, as well as our Parthian areas, since [g108] they are native to us, as well as Asorestan, Tachkastan, and Atrpatakan. Why should I enumerate them one by one? Many are the places which I have gone to in peace, and many [are the places] which I have ruined and looted through warfare..."

204.-205. The next day the chief executioner came forward to receive an order for the slaying of saint Gayiane'. [The king becomes disoriented and believes that Hr'ip'sime' is still alive. Finally, he orders the torture and execution of Gayiane', g109. Not translated.]

206. The chief-executioner emerged [from his meeting with King Trdat] boasting that he would give [Gayiane'] a wicked death. He had [the prisoners] removed in chains from the city via the South gate, by the avenue leading to the Metsamawr bridge. [The prisoners were taken] to the place where they were

accustomed to kill all who had been condemned to death, a swampy place near the moat that went round the city. For each of them they brought four stakes [g110].

207-208. [Prayers of Gayiane' and the execution of the Christians, g110-g111. Not translated.]

209. [Of 70 people who had accompanied Gayiane' to Armenia, 37 were martyred, g111. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [210. ff.](#)

210. So it was that on the 26th day of the month of Hor'i [September] saint Hr'ip'sime' died with a class of 33 fellow martyrs. And on the 28th of Hor'i, saint Gayiane' with two of her companions who fought along with her, were martyred and received the crown of victory.

211. For six days the king remained in deep sorrow and profound sadness due to his passionate love for the beautiful Hr'ip'sime'. Afterwards he decided to go hunting. He had all his troops gather the hounds, he distributed the beaters, the nets and traps were put in place, and then he went to hunt in the plain of P'ar'akan Shemak.

212. However, when the king had mounted his cart and wanted to leave the city, suddenly punishment from the Lord fell upon him. An unclean spirit attacked the king and threw him out of the cart. Then the king began to go crazy and to eat his own flesh. Just like Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians, his human exterior was transformed to resemble a wild pig and, like one of them, he went and dwelled with them. He went into the reeds and ate reeds in full senselessness, wallowing naked on the plain [g112]. Although [his retinue] wanted to stop him and take him back into the city, they could not. [This was for two reasons:] one, because of [Trdat's] natural strength, and two, because of the power of the demons who had taken him over.

213. Moreover, all the people in the city, similarly, had gone crazy through demonic possession. An incredible disaster settled over the land. [Almost] all in the king's household, including slaves and servants, were struck with torments and there was deep mourning because of it.

214. Then it came about that a vision from God was visited upon the king's sister, whose name was Xosroviduxt. Afterwards she came and spoke to people, describing the vision and saying: "A vision appeared to me this evening. A man in the form of light came and told me that 'Nothing will cure the injuries which have come upon you unless you send to the city of Artashat and bring from there the prisoner Grigoris. He will come and teach you how to cure your ills'."

215. Now as soon as people heard this, they began to laugh at her words. Then they commenced talking with her, saying: "Then you, too, have gone crazy. Some demon has afflicted you. How could it be [as you describe] since it has been these 15 years since [Gregory] was thrown into the incredibly deep [g113] pit. And you are saying that he still lives. Where would even his bones be found? For on the same day that they lowered him down [into the pit] he would have perished merely from the sight of the snakes."

216. Yet the same vision came to the woman again—it was repeated five more times—with threats that if she did not reveal this, she would experience great torments, while the injuries suffered by people and by the king would increase even more with various torments and death. Then Xosroviduxt went back with great fear and concern, and revealed the angel's words.

217. Then they quickly sent there a certain senior *naxarar* (lord) whose name was O'tay. [The latter] went to the city of Artashat to remove [Gregory] from the prison of the deep pit. Now as soon as O'tay had reached the city of Artashat, the citizens came before him to ask the cause of his arrival. He told them: "I have come to take the prisoner Gregory." Now they were astonished and all replied: "Who knows if he is still alive, for

many years have passed since they lowered him down there." However [O'tay] related the details of the vision and what had happened.

218. Then they brought long and thick ropes which they tied together and lowered down. The *naxarar* O'tay shouted in a loud voice [g114], calling out: "Gregorios, if you are alive somewhere there, come forth, for that god of yours whom you worship, has commanded that you be removed from there." Then [Gregory] rose to his feet, moved the rope, and grabbed hold of it.

219. When they felt this, they pulled him up. They saw that his body had darkened and was black as coal. Then they brought forth clothing and dressed him and delightedly took him from the city of Artashat and went to the city of Vagharshapat. At that point the king, wracked with pain, emerged from the herd of pigs naked and disgraced and, led by the demon, came before [Gregory]. The *naxarars* waited for them outside the city.

Classical Armenian text: [220. ff.](#)

220. Now as soon as they saw from a distance that Gregory was coming with O'tay and many other people from the city of Artashat, [the lords] rushed forward, frenzied and eating their own flesh, infested with demons and foaming at the mouth.

221. Then [Gregory] immediately kneeled and prayed and [the lords] returned to their senses. [Gregory] ordered that they cover their bodies with clothing and hide their shame. The king and the *naxarars* came forward and took hold [g115] of the blessed Gregory's feet, saying: "We beg you to forgive the crime which we committed against you."

222. Then he came forward and raised them from the ground, saying: "I am a man like you, and have a body like yours. But you must recognize your creator who created the heavens and the earth, the moon and stars, the sea and the land. He is able to heal you."

223. Then Gregory began to make inquiries, asking where they had put the bodies of the martyrs of God. They asked: "Which martyrs do you mean?" [Gregory] replied: "The ones who, for God, died by your hands." Then they showed him the places. [Gregory] hastened to gather and assemble the bodies from the places where they had been killed, for they were still there. And they saw that their bodies had been preserved through the power of God. For nine days and nine nights had passed since their bodies had been lying there out in the open and yet no wild beast, no dogs—which were present there outside and near the city—had approached, no bird had damaged them. And their bodies did not smell.

224. They brought fine garments to cover them. However, the blessed Gregory did not deem worthy the shrouds that the king or the other people had brought. Instead, each [g116] saint was wrapped in the saint's own torn clothing. He said: "For now [let these be the shrouds] until you are worthy to wrap their bodies." And so [Gregory] wrapped them in [these] shrouds and went to the wine press which had been their dwelling, and made it his own residence. The blessed Gregory offered prayers to God the entire night for their salvation and begged that they might be converted and find a way to repentance.

225. Early the next day the king, the *naxarars* (lords), and the grandee nobility together with a great mob of people, came and knelt before saint Gregory and before the holy bones of God's martyrs and said: "Forgive us all our evil crimes which we perpetrated on you, and beseech God on our behalf so that we will not be lost" [g117].

226.-258. [Gregory's sermons, g117-g132. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [259. ff.](#)

259.-721. [*The Teachings of Saint Gregory*, g133-g368. Not translated.]

722.-756. [Additional preaching. Gregory reveals a vision he had about animals changing their colors, g369-g384. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [757. ff.](#)

757. Having said this, [Gregory] ordered that they quickly assemble building materials [to construct chapels for the slain Christians]. When the entire mass of people heard this, each one rushed to prepare the materials. They gathered and piled up at the designated places some boulders, stones, bricks, and pine [or, cedar] wood. They prepared this material happily, quickly, and in great fear.

758. Then saint Gregory himself took in hand the line of a building architect and drew the foundations for the saints' chapels of repose. Every person in the entire multitude lent assistance and they built up a finished structure, following the beautiful, well-placed foundation. Everyone participated, even the women helped, according to their weak feminine strength. Thus, one and all worked with faith and great fear so that they would not be deprived of healing or lose a share of the grace of salvation.

759. They erected three martyria: one at the northeastern side of the city, where Hr'ip'sime' the *san* ("protégé," "tutee") had been martyred with 32 companions. They built one [chapel] in the southern area, where Gayiane', her [g385] guardian, and two companions had been martyred. And the other [chapel they built] near the wine press, in the vineyard where their residence had been. They built and arranged these places and adorned them with burning lamps of gold and silver, with kindled lanterns, and blazing candelabras.

760. And he ordered that a repository should be made for each of them, box-shaped, made of pine [or, cedar] wood firmly held together with iron nails. All of them did as [Gregory] had ordered and prepared [the coffins] and then, as they had been commanded, they brought before saint Gregory, outside the door of the wine press, the boxes made for the repose of the saints. He took them and, all alone, went inside. Nor did he allow anyone else to enter, saying: "It is not appropriate for you to come near or approach them, you who have not yet been healed and not yet been cleansed by baptism." He went in by himself and, one by one, he took [the remains] of each of the saints and placed them, wrapped in their clothing, in boxes. And then he sealed [the boxes] with the seal of Christ.

761. The king, all the nobility, the grandees, *naxarars*, (lords) *azats* (gentry), and all the troops brought sweet-smelling oil and precious incense, multi-colored embroidered fabrics made of silk with golden threads [g386]. The king's wife and the royal princesses, the noble women and the daughters of the grandees brought as clothing for the saints brocades of purple, gold, and sky-blue and others white as snow. Similarly, they quickly piled up gold and silver outside the door of the wine press.

762. Now when saint Gregory emerged, he saw these [items] heaped up by the door of the wine press. But he did not allow them to offer any of these things to [the martyrs], saying: "Did I not earlier say that it is improper for you to offer anything of yours to them until you have been cleansed by baptism? Still, your willingness is a good sign for your salvation. Let all this remain in the royal treasury until you are granted a shepherd and teacher by God's benevolent providence and are provided with leaders, chief priests, overseeing bishops and presbyters of the ecclesiastical order for your illumination in the love of God. Then all this will go far as vessels for worship at the glorious altar of God by the hand of the established chief priest. But now come and let us put each of these [martyrs] to their rest."

763. King Trdat at the time [still] was entirely in the form of a pig, except [g387] that he could speak like a human. The claws of his hands and feet were like those of a pig; his face was like a snout; he had big tusks like a huge boar, and his body was covered all over with thick bristles like a hog. Yet he was [present] there among the people, covering his face and head, wearing a hairshirt he had donned—and presenting quite a sight to behold. [King Trdat] approached and begged saint Gregory that at least his hands and feet might be healed so that he might be worthy of participating, if only somewhat, in making the buildings for the saints.

764. The blessed Gregorios went on his knees to God, the benevolent and kind Lord of all, by the caskets containing the blessed bodies of Christ's martyrs, raising his arms to heaven, and begging for healing for all the people and for the king. Then he turned to the king and, by the grace of Christ, his feet and hands were healed. The claws of his hands and feet fell off so that he might have a small share in the blessed work for the saints, using his own hands.

765. [The king] asked Gregory what he commanded him [to do]. And [Gregory] gave him measurements for the holy caskets, that he might dig places for each to repose in, and arrange these inside [g388] the resting place of the martyrs. Then [King Trdat] beseeched Gregory to give orders about [employment] of his wife Ashxen and then of his true (*harazat*) sister, whose name was Xosroviduxt, that they might be able to participate in the work. And [Gregory] gave the command and they went along with him to help with the work. [King Trdat] took the measurements of the boxes to dig trenches for places of rest for the saints inside the funerary chapels.

766. The king took axe and spade and dug out places of rest for the saints according to the size of the caskets. Meanwhile, the two [women] Queen Ashxe'n and the king's sister Xosroviduxt, put the earth which had been excavated into their garments and removed it. Thus they prepared in this order places [of repose]: first for saint Hr'ip'sime', then for her 32 companions, in the place where their blessed martyrs' blood had been shed, by the place of repose readied for the holy and glorious altar of Christ. Similarly, at the martyrrium to the south of the city, [King Trdat] prepared a place there for the blessed Gayiane' and her two companions. King Trdat himself with his sister Xosroviduxt and Queen Ashxe'n, prepared places of repose for each of the saints [g389] with their own hands.

767. Then the king came and requested leave from saint Gregory for a seven-day journey so that he might ascend lofty Mount Masis [Ararat]. From the summit of the mountain he took enormous boulders, solid, unhewn, unworked, wide, tall, gigantic rocks. [These were] rocks which no individual or even a multitude of men could move. Yet [King Trdat] lifted up eight of them, put them on his shoulders and carried them back to the chapels, since he had a giant's strength, like Hayk. Four of these [boulders] he set up as a threshold, as though in exchange for the thoughtless battle he had fought with the saint in his own room, where, through the all-saving grace [of God] she defeated him and wrought such astounding deeds. Now [King Trdat] showed everyone the labor of his own hands, as a crown of victory.

768. When [the builders] had completed three blessed chapels, they adorned and decorated them. Then they brought and emplaced each [of the martyrs] in her own sanctuary. Saint Gayiane' he put in the martyrrium to the south [of the city] with her two companions in martyrdom. Similarly, the blessed Hr'ip'sime' with her 32 companions they placed in the chapel built to the east [g390]. To the north of the city [they built] the temple of the sole [martyr] who had been slain at the wine press. Having gathered together [the remains] of all the saints, they transferred all of Christ's cross-enveloped witnesses to their own dwellings, which had been built as resting-places for the martyrs. And this was done according to the command in the vision which earlier had appeared to Gregory.

769. And in the center of the pavillions, over the resting-places of these life-containing graves, among the altars, [Gregory] set up the holy sign of the Lord's cross in each of the three chapels. He said: "Only in front of this all-saving sign should you worship the Lord God, your creator. Behold, firm pillars have been set up in

your insubstantial building. These are the pillars which bear the heavy weight of the edifice of your salvation. Behold the three pillars. The fourth is the pillar of life, which will lift you up to God. Now come and let us honorably enclose the place designated and commanded us for the Lord's house."

Classical Armenian text: [770. ff.](#)

770. Then [Gregory] with the king and all the people went to the place which had been revealed by the fiery column with its golden base. They honorably enclosed the place with a high wall and with doors and locks [g391] secured it. They erected the sign of the redeeming cross there so that everyone might go to that spot, kneel, and worship God, the almighty creator.

771. And in this way did [Gregory] illuminate the hearts and souls of the people with preaching, seasoning them with the salt of divinity. They abandoned the worship of vain idols, which had been made by hand, and turned instead to the worship of benevolent God.

772. After this, they willingly turned to fasting and prayers, to fear [of God] and love for and attention to God's teachings.

773. Now when they had assembled in the place of worship in the House of God, the blessed Gregory began to speak, saying: "All of you bend the knee so that the Lord may work healing for your injuries." Then they all kneeled to God, and then the blessed Gregory with great prayers and pleas, through his strong asceticism and in tears, begged for the king's healing. The king, while standing there among the people with the appearance of a pig, suddenly trembled and the pig-like skin fell off his body along with the tusk-like teeth and snout-like [g392] face. The thick, bristle-like hair which had attached to his skin, also fell off. His face returned to its own form and the [skin of] his body became soft, like that of a newly-born infant. He was completely healed in all his limbs.

774. Similarly, all the people who were gathered in their multitude, shook off their ailments, each one of them. [These included] lepers, paralytics, those dried up in their limbs, those with dropsy, those possessed, those with scurvy, or with gout. Thus opened the almighty healing grace of merciful Christ to cure everyone by Gregory's hand. All the afflicted ones shook off their ailments. And thus opened the fountain of the knowledge of Christ, as the ears of all of them became full of the true teaching of God.

775. Thereafter there was heartfelt joy and such panoramas that pleased the eye. For the country, which previously had been ignorant even of the news about all the divine miracles which had occurred in foreign places, now suddenly became cogniscent of them. And this was not only about current developments, but also about earlier tidings and what followed, about the beginning [of Christianity] and its developments, and all [g393] the divine traditions.

776. Now when they saw the stability of these things, there were more students and they were more open and eager to assemble to study the new doctrine. As ignorant folk, they became more inclined to be instructed in this preaching. From all parts and districts of the land of the Armenians, great numbers [of people] eagerly thronged to this fountain which had opened, this source of the grace and knowledge of Christ. For the grace of the preaching of the Gospel of God's commandments gushed forth in the district of Ayarat at the royal residence of the Armenian House of T'orgom.

777. Then [Gregory] took counsel with the king, the *naxarars* (lords), and the troops and came to an agreement about a general peace. [They agreed] to pull down, wreck, and obliterate the scandal [of paganism] from their midst—to completely destroy it. This was to prevent [the existence of paganism] from being an obstacle or stumbling block for anyone as they [spiritually] ascended to the freedom On High. Moreover, [the destruction of paganism] would encourage everyone to attain perfect goodness, which the blessed Paul

designated as a goal: "That united we may attain the measure of the stature of Christ," whose freedom is in heaven, seeking the great Savior, God" [g394], [so that] our boast is in the Cross and our praise is to the glory of God.

778. Immediately after this, the king, by sovereign edict and with the consent of all, entrusted the blessed Gregory with the work of destroying and eliminating the former ancestral gods of his forefathers—falsely called gods—and consigning them to oblivion. The king himself, with all the troops, left the city of Vagharshapat and went to the city of Artashat to destroy the altars of the goddess Anahit there as well as at the place called Erazamoyrn. *En route* he came upon the temple of the god Tir—the interpreter of dreams, the scribe of [pagan] priestly knowledge, who was called the Diwan secretary of Ormazd—a temple of learned instruction. They set to work and demolished, burned, wrecked, and ruined it.

779. It was here that demons appeared which had taken the forms of a multitude of cavalry and a brigade of infantry armed with lances and javelins, and rushed forth like men armed with spears and flags. With a great cry they fled into the temple of Anahit where they fell upon and fought with those who had arrived. From the height of the building, they rained down on the people below useless arrows and rocks [g395]. However, they barely frightened the people with their new faith. Saint Gregory, when he saw this, made the sign of the Lord's cross and went to the door of the temple. Then the entire structure of the temple shook from its foundation and collapsed. Catching fire suddenly from the power of the Lord's sign, the wooden parts [of the temple] burned and smoke rose to the clouds.

Classical Armenian text: [780. ff.](#)

780. All the demons turned in flight before the people, tearing their collars, striking their foreheads, shrieking and crying loudly: "Woe to us, woe to us, woe to us. For Jesus, the son of Mary a daughter of man, has forced us to flee from the whole world. And from this place too—through this imprisoned and dead man—he has forced us to flee. But since his glory has filled the entire universe, where shall we flee to? Let us go to the inhabitants of Mount Caucasus, in the northern regions. Maybe we will be able to survive there. For without rest, [Jesus] has made us beat the air and has separated us from the habitations of humankind [preventing] us from accomplishing our desires through them."

781. When this was said in front of everyone, those who heard it were even more confirmed in the faith. Then the black brigade [g396] of demons vanished and quit that place like smoke. Meanwhile, the people who had come there demolished the foundations and wrecked what remained and gave to the poor, the suffering, and the needy, a portion of the accumulated treasures [of the temples]. Furthermore, they devoted to the Church's needs the [temples'] estates and servants with the pagan priests and their lands and borders.

782. [Gregory] sowed the word of true religion among all of them and set them all on the road to the Lord, so that they would be knowledgeable in the commands of the Creator. In all the cities, villages, hamlets, and estates of the Armenians he indicated sites for the house of God. However, he did not lay any foundations or erect altars in the name of God, since he lacked the rank of priesthood. He merely enclosed certain areas with walls and set up the sign of the Lord's cross. Similarly, at the entrances and exits of roads, in streets, squares, and intersections, he erected the same sign as a guard and a refuge for all to worship.

783. After this, he took the noble sons of the Arsacid clan and trained them in doctrine. First was Trdat, the king, with all his House [g397]. Similarly, [Gregory] tried to implant knowledge of the truth in every soul. Thus did he fill all places with the holy Gospel of the Lord and cautioned all of them to traverse the paths of life in innocence, and then put it into their minds that they should only worship the Lord their God and serve only Him.

784. Then, entrusting them to the all-protecting grace of God, [Gregory] took the king and departed, so that the word of life might germinate in other places within all the borders of the land of Armenia. He arrived at the district of Daranaghik' in order to destroy there the altars of those falsely called gods. There, in the village of T'ordan, was a famous temple to the so-called god Barshamin of dazzling whiteness. First they destroyed that and smashed his image, then they looted all the treasures of gold and silver and gave a portion to the poor. They dedicated that village, with all its estates and borders to the name of the Church. They also erected there a copy of the all-saving sign [of the cross].

785. Then the blessed one quickly brought forth his evangelical skills [of preaching] [g398]. With the devoted aid of the king, [Gregory] took over the district and brought all of them to the obedient service to Christ, leading them from their patrimonial traditions of demonic devil worship. When the word of life germinated among them and all were educated in piety, very great signs appeared to the residents of that district, for the demons, assuming various forms, fled to the Xaghtik' areas. When [the residents of Daranaghik'] also had been confirmed [in the faith], he went to the fortified place called Ani, the site of the royal cemetery of the kings of the Armenians. There they destroyed the altar of the god Zeus-Armazd, who was called the father of all the gods. They erected there the Lord's sign, while they gifted in service to the Church the town and all its fortifications.

786. After this, [Gregory] went on to the bordering district of Ekegheats'. Here the demons appeared in the places of worship of the great and native temples of the kings of the Armenians, at the temple of Anahit in the district of Ere'z. It was here, in the form of an army carrying shields, that the demons gathered to fight, and they made the mountains reverberate with their great roaring. But they were put to flight [g399] and, as they fled, the high walls fell and were levelled. Those who had arrived, the converted troops, saint Gregory, and the king, broke into pieces the gold statue of the female goddess Anahit and completely destroyed and looted the place, taking the gold and silver as booty. From there they crossed to the other side of the Gayl River and destroyed the temple of Nane', Aramazd's daughter in the hamlet of T'il. The looted treasures of the two temples were gathered up and placed in service to the holy Church of God, along with the sites themselves.

787. Thus, in many places they removed [the idols/images], the scandalous, silent, cast [from metals], hammered, beaten, sculpted, useless, profitless, harmful creations of foolish, deranged people. [The people] were consciously converted and confirmed in the faith. The king, with his grand authority, gave an order to people in those areas—who were possessed by Satan and the demons—to abandon and free themselves from the vain old superstitious cults and to become obedient to the lightest yoke of service to Christ.

788. Now while [Gregory] there, too, was acting with the consent of all, generally filling everyone with the advantages of preaching, he was not [solely] relying on the awe and power of the king [g400]. [Gregory] was convincing everyone, not merely with words, but also with miracles, signs, and various types of healings, to make the name of Christ glorious. All this was achieved by the will of benevolent God, through Gregory. The king himself went to every place [where Gregory preached] and also preached, confessing his impieties and telling about all the miracles God had visited upon him and the mercy of his healing. He disclosed these things, speaking in a loud voice in front of everyone.

789. Then [Gregory] hastened to the district of Derjan so that there, too, he might spread the message of Apostolic preaching with works of labor. This was to free them from their pagan way of life, which was of a foul, demonic, satanic, and monstrous nature. He taught those barbarous regions to change their gross and rough pagan ways to the sobriety of divinely taught wisdom, to familiarize them with the glad tidings of the Gospel and to confirm them [in the faith].

Classical Armenian text: [790. ff.](#)

790. He came to the temple of Mihr [Mithra], known as the son of Aramazd, located in the village called Bagayar'ich in the Parthian language. This they levelled to its foundations and the treasures [g401] accumulated there were taken as booty, and distributed among the poor. The sites themselves were gifted to the Church. He confirmed the inhabitants of the land in the knowledge of the truth. Then he took care to instruct in the rational divine wisdom the accompanying [royal] courtiers along with the grandee nobility and all the *azatagund* brigade of the army.

791. King Tiridates together with his wife, the *tikin* (queen) Ashxe'n and his sister Xosroviduxt, gave an order that an assembly be convened of all his forces. Then at once from all sides, in accordance with the order, people came to assemble in the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayrarat. The king also went there. In addition there assembled before the king all the troops, the grantees and governors (*kusakalk'*), rulers of districts, dignitaries, notables, military leaders, chiefs, princes, *naxarars* (lords), *azats* (gentry), judges and officers.

792. The king deliberated with all of them, urging them to become heirs to good deeds. He said: "Come, let us hasten to make as our pastor Gregory, this leader of our lives given to us by God, so that [g402] he illuminate us with baptism and renew us, as a teacher of the law by the sacrament of God, our creator.

793. Now Gregory would not agree to accept the dignity of the chief priesthood, saying: "I cannot do this because of its immeasurable loftiness, because this honor of the glory given by Christ to serve as an intermediary between God and humankind [is so profound that it] is indescribable. Instead, let them search for and find someone who is worthy."

794. Now it happened after this, that a marvellous vision from God appeared to the king. [In it] he saw the angel of God speaking to him and saying: "Without delay you must have Gregory ordained to the chief priesthood, for him to illuminate you through baptism." Similarly, the angel of God appeared to Gregory in a vision, so that he would not dare to persist in his stubbornness about the matter. He said: "It is Christ Who is commanding you." Then [Gregory] accepted it immediately, saying: "Let God's will be done."

795. Then the king quickly, piously, and with great delight assembled by him the chief *naxarars* and the governors of the lands; first, the prince of Angegh *tun*; second, the prince of Aghdznik' who was the great *bdeash*; third, the prince [g403] of the principality of the *Mardpet*-dom; fourth, the *aspet*, prince of the principality [with the right] of crowning the king; fifth, the prince of the *sparapetut'iwn*, the general of the land of the Armenians; sixth, the prince of the land of Korduk'; seventh, the prince of the land of Tsop'k'; eighth, the prince of the land of Gugark', who is called "the other *bdeash*"; ninth, the prince of the land of the R'shtunik'; tenth, the prince of the land of Mokk'; eleventh, the prince of the land of Siwnik'; twelfth, the prince of the land of Tsawde'k'; thirteenth, the prince of the land of Utik'; fourteenth, the prince *shahap* of the district of Zarawand and Her; fifteenth, the prince of the House of the *Maghxaz*-dom; sixteenth, the prince of the Artsrunik'.

796. These were the chosen princes, governors, holders of regions, thousanders, and ten thousanders in the land of Armenia, the House of T'orgom, whom King Trdat assembled and sent to the Cappadocian areas, to the city of Caesarea, which is called Mazhak' in the Armenian language, so that they take Gregory to be installed as chief priest in their land. They prepared for the journey. And [the king] commanded that an edict be written, with this import [g404].

Copy of the Edict

797.-801. [The letter is addressed to Leontius (Ghewondios), Archbishop of Caesarea, and asks that he ordain Gregory, g405-g407. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [802. ff.](#)

802. [The members of the Armenian delegation] organized and prepared [for the journey], taking along with them gifts: gold, silver, horses, mules, clothing of many colors, as decorations and for honorable service in the holy places of the houses of God, where they were being sent. For all the [major] churches that they would pass, they took prepared gifts.

803. Then they put Gregory into the royal carriage, which was covered with gold and pulled by white mules. All the princes gathered around him with carriages and horses, troops, banners, each [prince] with his own brigade, and then departed from the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayrarat. They reached the borders of the Greeks [Byzantines], where in every city they were received with much honor and organized hospitality. There was much rejoicing [g407], delight, and feasting when they heard about the miracles wrought by God, about the turn to salvation, and about their useful journey [for Gregory's ordination].

804. And thus honored on their journey, they arrived at the city of Caesarea. There they saw the blessed *kat'oghikos* Leontius, and all the brigades of blessed clerics and all the classes of servitors with their angelic religion. They greeted them and informed them of what [wonders] God had wrought, and gave the king's letter to the blessed chief priest. [Leontius] received it with great joy and all the citizens rejoiced. They all held a feast of celebration and honored saint Gregory for his meritorious virtue and persistence in his martyr-like battles, glorifying him with candles, psalms, and spiritual songs. The princes of the city showed great honor to those who had arrived, receiving them with great care, according to their Christian custom. Thus [Gregory] was greatly exalted by all, according to the merit of the blessed name of martyr which he had received.

805. Then there took place in the city of Caesarea an assembly of multitudes of bishops, so that they [g408] ordain the blessed Gregory. They passed on to him great honor and glory: the honor of the humility of Christ's priesthood, and the loftiness of the episcopacy of God's glory. [Holding] the blessed Gospel, the assembly of bishops, chief of them being Leontius, laid their hands on him, so that he might receive authority in heaven and on earth to receive the keys of the kingdom, to bind and loose on earth.

806. With great honor and a letter [the Caesarean clerics] sent off saint Gregory with the princes. They exchanged greetings and, with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, set out on the road, arriving at the city of Sebastia. They remained there for not a few days. There [Gregory] found a multitude of [clerical] brothers whom he convinced to accompany him, so that he might appoint them to the priesthood of his land. He took brigades of them along with him. [Gregory] was greatly exalted by the bishops, princes, and people of that land.

807. Now whatever [place] they passed through, the people crowded together to see the blessed bishop, Gregory, to be blessed by him. And they said to one another: "Come, let us see the blessed bishop, Gregory, for he is [g408] that man who, for Christ, endured torments and, being found to be a faithful martyr, has inherited the name of confessor.

808. After this [Gregory] took with him the multitude of those [priests] consenting [to accompany him] as well as the troops of nobles. Taking leave with gifts of gratitude, [Gregory] and all his people set out, with the grace of God. Thus, passing many way stations, he arrived at the land of Armenia, in health, success, and spiritual joy.

809. As soon as they had reached the borders of the Armenians, Gregory heard that there remained in the Taro'n country a temple to Vahagn, a temple with a large treasury, full of gold and silver and many gifts presented by the grandee kings. This was the eighth famous shrine, named for Vahagn the Dragon-Reaper, a place of sacrifice for the kings of Great Armenia, [located] on the summit of K'ark'e Mountain on the [banks

of the] Euphrates River, which faces the great Taurus Mountains, and called Yashtishat after the frequent sacrifices [made there]. At this time there still were three sanctuaries [remaining] in it: first was the temple of Vahe'van [Vahagn], second was [the altar to] the Golden Mother, the goddess born of gold, and the altar was named, after her, golden built [g410] of the Golden-mother goddess; and third was the temple named after the goddess Astghik—who is the Greek Aphrodite—called the Chamber of Vahagn. Now saint Gregory went there so that he might also demolish this site, since ignorant folk were still making impure sacrifices at its remaining altars.

Classical Armenian text: [810. ff.](#)

810. As [Gregory] was returning from Greek territory, he brought with him some relics of the bones of the great prophet, the blessed John the Baptist, and of Athenagenes, the holy martyr of Christ. Once they had arrived opposite the temples, near the Euphrates River, [Gregory] wanted to take [the relics] up to the heights where the temples were located, to destroy the altars and to construct martyria for them.

811. When they had arrived at a distance of about two stadia from the Euphrates River and wanted to cross through yet another small valley with water in it, the white mules [pulling] the cart that contained the divine treasures—the relics of the saints—stopped and [the drivers] were unable to move them through the valley. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Gregory and said: "It has pleased the Lord that the saints of God should dwell here in this place." And so the multitude of troops all together built a chapel and transferred the saints' [relics] there as a resting place.

812. While they were building the chapel [g411], Gregory ordered the troops and the princes who were with him to come with hammers and destroy the buildings of the altars. Those who came forth tried hard, but they were unable to find the doors of the temples to go inside, since the demons had concealed [the entrances] from them. They tried from the outside, but their iron tools could not scratch [the structure]. Then the princes hastened to tell [Gregory] everything that had happened.

813. And so [Gregory] took the sign of the Lord's cross and, ascending from the valley, went opposite the lofty places of the structures. There he said: "Lord, let your angel drive them away." At his words, a strong wind blew from the wooden cross which the holy bishop held in his hand. The wind strengthened and rose as high as the mountain where it levelled, overturned, and demolished all the structures of the altars. It so destroyed things that afterwards no one could find traces of anything—not stone, wood, gold, or silver. [The destruction was so thorough that] it seemed as though nothing ever had been present there. Moreover, countless people there who were associated with the pagan priesthood were destroyed—even their bones vanished. Seeing this, countless people believed. Then saint Gregory said: "See now, your obstacles have been removed, for they were [g412] nothing. From now on serve the Lord God who made heaven and earth.

814. After this [Gregory] went to the place of the temples, gathered the folk of the land, and converted them to piety. It was there [in Taro'n] that he laid the foundations of a church and erected an altar to the glory of Christ. For it was there that he first made a start to building churches. He raised an altar in the name of the Holy Trinity and a baptismal font, first [baptising] the grandee *naxarars* (lords) who were with him and had accompanied him to the city of Caesarea, then [he baptized] the people of the district, the residents of the country. For 20 days he stayed there and baptized more than 190,000 people. He raised an altar in the shrine of repose [of the relics] of the saints which he had built, and offered the liturgy of salvation, distributing there the life-giving body and blood of Christ.

815. [Gregory] ordered that every year everyone should assemble there joyfully [making] a feast-day to commemorate the saints, on the seventh day of the month of *Sahmi* [October]. For it was in that place [in Taro'n] that [Gregory] started building churches. He designated priests in different places and filled the area with priests and the construction of churches [g413].

816. Then [Gregory] himself left that place, with the grand splendor of the power of the cross of Christ, and half the relics of the saints, so that he might establish their remembrances in other locations. He circulated throughout every place and all districts. In hamlets and estates he built churches, baptized, and designated priests.

817. The great King Trdat heard that Gregory had arrived at the country of the Armenians. He took his troops, his queen (*tikin*), Ashxe'n, and his sister, Xosroviduxt, and went to the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayrarat, to come before Gregory. He reached the town of Bagawan, meaning Dits'awan in the Parthian language, and remained there awaiting him for a month. Meanwhile, [Gregory] was moving around to fill every place with churches, priests, servitors, and all the ranks of divine service, and to illuminate many with baptism.

818. Then he arrived at [the place] called Dits'awan, with all the grandees and the troops and the mass of common folk, who had gathered from various places. They went and circulated around with [Gregory] and found healing from him and also fulfillment of each one's needs. And [Gregory] [g414] through his teaching that spread to all, sowed in them the word of Life. With all the servitors of the Gospel who were with him [from Sebastia] whom no one could name in full, he preached the Gospel. Then [Gregory], the blessed bishop, through the grace of God, arrived at the base of Npat Mountain.

819. The king with all the troops went before him, to the banks of the Euphrates River. At their meeting, [Gregory] filled all of them with the greeting of Christ's Gospel. And, with much delight and joy, they returned to the hamlet. There the princes gave to the king the response to [Trdat's] letter of greeting, which they had brought [from Caesarea]. It had the following contents [g415]:

Copy of the Letter of Reply

820.-826. [The Letter of Reply, g415-g419. Not translated.]

827. They were happy at the consolation of the letter; and also because the travellers had arrived [in Armenia] illuminated, and with visible gifts of divine grace. They spread all the more their fervor of divine love and were even more firmly established in the faith [g418].

828.-830. [Not translated, g419-g420.]

Classical Armenian text: [831. ff.](#)

831. There [Gregory] laid the foundations and built a church, and it was there, in the Lord's house, that he gave a home to the relics he had of the saints' bones. Similarly, throughout all parts of the districts he laid foundations for churches, erected altars, and designated priests. The entire country was converted with all their hearts and were diligent in fasting and in the service and fear of God.

832. At the final completion of the fast, the blessed Gregory took the army, the king himself, his wife, Ashxe'n, the great princess (*o'riordn*) Xosroviduxt, and all the grandees, and all the people of the retinue, and early in the day, at dawn, he took them to the banks of the Euphrates River and baptized all of them, in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When all the people and the king descended to the waters of the Euphrates River for baptism, a marvellous sign appeared from God. For the waters of the river stopped and turned around. Then a bright light appeared in the form of a luminous column and came and rested over the waters in the likeness [g420] of the Lord's cross. The light shined out so brightly that it obscured and reduced the sun's rays. The oil of anointing which Gregory poured over people floated around them in the river. All were astounded and raised blessings to the

glory of God. The sign disappeared in the evening, and [the people] returned to the hamlet. On that day more than 150,000 from the royal army were baptized.

834. [Not translated, g421].

835. [Gregory] remained there for seven days after this, for spiritual consolation. And during those seven days he baptized more than four million people from the royal retinue, men, women, and children.

836. [Gregory] set the date for commemorating [the deaths of] the martyrs [whose relics] he had brought, declaring as a major holiday the [day(s) of the former] holiday of the vain gods Amanor, bringer of the new fruits and of *Hiwre"nkal* Vanatur, which previously they joyously celebrated in the same place on the feast of New Year's Day (*Nawasard*). [Gregory stipulated] that they [now] should gather and celebrate in that hamlet and on the same day [a feast] for the great and blessed John [the Baptist] and for the holy martyr of God, At'anagine's.

837. Then the blessed Gregory put his teachings in effect, sweetening [the teachings] so that the people would accept them. Meanwhile, he also filled everyone with spiritual blessing through deeper instruction. After this, he went to all districts in the land of Greater Armenia, building churches in all [g422] districts, regions, cities, hamlets, cultivated areas, villages, and estates. Similarly, the king decreed that throughout his entire realm, four fields in every estate and seven fields in every hamlet should be placed in service to the priesthood, for them to offer their fruits to the Lord.

838. [Gregory] established priests everywhere, and ordered that [the people] only worship the Lord God, creator of heaven and earth. He increased the servitors of the altar of the Lord everywhere and established priests for each altar in all the churches. Similarly, he elevated bishops to primacy over the people of the Lord and ordered them to be faithful in their leadership and to illuminate and oversee the flock of Christ.

839. Likewise, [Gregory] convinced the king that from every district and from every region, a multitude of children should be assembled for the purpose of educating these savage and wild natives with their beast-like mentalities. He took and cast them into the furnace of instruction, and through the heat of spiritual love melted away the disease and rust of the putrid demons and vain cults [g423]. He so separated them from their patrimonial residents that one could say about them "I have forgotten the people and the house of my faith."

Classical Armenian text: [840. ff.](#)

840. From every place within the borders of the Armenians, from all the lands and districts of his realm, King Trdat ordered that many young children should be introduced to the art of writing, and that trustworthy *vardapets* be put over them. In particular [he ordered that] the families of the impure pagan priests and their children should be gathered together in groups at suitable places and that adequate stipends be established for them. These [people] were divided into two groups with one group [learning] Syriac and the other, Greek. And so, in the twinkling of an eye, these residents of the land with their savage, empty, beast-like minds, suddenly became acquainted with the prophets, familiar with the apostles, and heirs to the gospel. They became fully informed about all the traditions of God.

841. [Gregory] then arrived at his former estate (*dastakert*) in the city of Vagharshapat, the capital of the district of Ayrarat. It was here that the divine commands had begun, where he had first seen [the vision] and erected the holy cross, where the blessed martyrs of God had been buried, and where he had erected in their martyria altars to God in the resting-places of the saints [g424]. [In Vagharshapat, also, Gregory] had built a house of God in the spot shown to him in an earlier vision, and where he had built a church to Christ. He did the same in the places where he had destroyed the temples earlier, and also in the city of Artashat, and everywhere. In the lands and districts generally he also labored this way and increased the churches and

designated priests, and fortified them with the stamp of Christ (baptism) so that all became filled with the Holy Spirit.

842. Thus throughout the entire country of the Armenians, from end to end, [Gregory] labored and spread the work of preaching and the gospel. He did this from the city of Satagha to the land of the Xaghtik', to Klarjk', all the way to the borders of the Mask'ut', to the gates of the Alans, to the borders of Kasp, to P'aytakaran, city of the kingdom of the Armenians, from the city of Amida to the city of Nisibis, from along the border of the Syrians to the country of Nor Shirakan, from Korduk' to the secure land of the Mar people, to the house of the prince of Mahk'r-Tun, to Atrpatakan [footnote to Toumanoff pp. 458-460 note98 for a discussion of the locations in this paragraph].

843. [Gregory] preached all the days of his life, summer and winter, day and night, fearlessly, without hesitation [g425] always spreading the good word of the gospel before kings, princes, and all the pagans, without resistance from opponents. He bore the name of Jesus, savior of all, [before everyone] and clothed every soul with divine vestments and spiritual armaments.

844. [Gregory] saved many prisoners and captives and others who were oppressed by tyrants, freeing them by the awesome power of Christ's glory. He also tore up many unjust contracts. Through his comforting teaching he gave the expectation of the hope in the appearance of glory of the great God and the savior of all, Jesus Christ, to many in mourning or ignorance. And he turned everyone to the state of true piety.

845. [Gregory] established many, countless, groups of monks in cultivated and uncultivated places, in the populous plains, in caves and retreats in the mountains. He took some of the children of the pagan priests and raised them in his own sight and under his own care, seeing to their training and nourishing them with spiritual care and piety. Those who were worthy of the rank of bishop received ordination from him. Of these, the first was named Aghbianos. The area of the Euphrates River [g426] was under his supervision. The second [bishop ordained] was Euthalius, who became shepherd over the savage areas of Basean. Third was Basos; fourth, Movse's; fifth, Eusebius; sixth, Yovhann'e's; seventh, Agape's; eighth, Artit'e's; ninth, Arsuke's; tenth, Antiok'e's; eleventh, Tirike's; twelfth, Kiwrakos. These people were those who were selected from the sons of the pagan priests to become bishops of various areas and to increase the preaching. As for the [many] others, one would be unable to list them, even if one wished to.

846. [Gregory] left Aghbianos, an honest, God-loving man, as overseer of the royal court retinue. He himself, from time to time, ascended mountains for a retreat, making himself an example. He took various students from their monasteries, going to live in the mountains, in solitude. In grottos and caves they made herbs their daily food. Thus they gave themselves over to austere mortifications especially since they looked for consolation in the sayings of the apostles "When I am weak for Christ, then I am strong," and "It would be better to boast in my weakness, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" [II. Corinthians. 12.9-12.10] [g427].

847.-858. [Not translated, g428-g432.]

Classical Armenian text: [859. ff.](#)

859. Now while the king along with the people were longing for [Gregory] to reside among them and lamenting his absence, they heard then from some informed people who told the king that Gregory, previously—while he was still a young man in the military—had been married and had sired two sons. The first of them was named Vrt'ane's, who led a secular life. However, subsequently he, too, was raised to the priesthood. The second [of Gregory's sons was named] Aristake's who, from childhood had been brought up in the service of God. [Aristake's] had entered the religion of hermits, living in the mountains and who had undertaken many different types of austerities with all diligence according to the gospel, giving himself

entirely to spiritual matters, to solitude, life in the mountains, hunger and thirst, a vegetarian life, being shut up without light, wearing a hairshirt, and sleeping on the ground. He often passed even the pleasant repose of night and the need for sleep standing on his feet in wakeful vigils. He did this for no short time, either. Finding other [like-minded people], he associated with them and instructed them in the same service of the gospel. And thus [g434] he willingly and bravely endured all the trials which came to him. In this way he was illuminated and became radiant, growing renowned and pleasing before God and all men.

860. Now when King Trdat heard all this, at once—without any delay—he sent three glorious and honorable senior nobles with edicts to quickly bring Gregory's two sons to him. And those who were sent by the king to bring them were these: the first was named Artawazd, who was the *sparapet* (commander-in-chief) of all the troops of Greater Armenia. The second [emissary] was named Tachat, prince of the district of Ashots'. Third was named Dat, the king's herald (*karapet*).

861. They arrived in the land of the Cappadocians and found Vrt'ane's in the city of Caesarea, and the blessed Aristake's dwelling in the desert in a retreat of his own. However, he did not agree to come down from the retreat until an assembly of many Christians convinced him to descend. They told him: "It is better for you to engage in God's work than to remain living in that retreat." And so, [the messengers] sent them off. [Gregory's sons] arrived [g434] in the country of the Armenians. Then [the messengers] brought Gregory's two sons into the king's presence. The king took them along with him and went forth looking for saint Gregory—wherever they might find him. They found him in the district of Daranaghik', in a retreat on the mountain called the Caves of Mane'.

862. Then the blessed king Trdat beseeched saint Gregory that—because he had not agreed to stay and circulate around with him, and since he loved the solitary life—he would, in exchange, ordain and give [to the king] as a bishop his son, Aristake's, whom [Trdat] had brought along. And [Gregory] ordained him to the episcopacy in his place, as it is written "The sons will take their fathers' place to rule over the land" (Ps. 44.17). [Aristake's] was even more successful than his father in his teachings, and after [Gregory], [Aristake's] occupied his patrimonial position and sat on the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of Greater Armenia. As for the great Gregory himself, he went around to the places he had put in order and the districts where he had taught in the land of the Armenians, to bring joy to [the people], to strengthen, renew, and confirm everyone [in the faith].

863. Trdat, the God-loving king, piously served [Gregory], teaching faith in Christ, being God-fearing and informed of the divine orders, and serving as an example of goodness to the entire land through his respect for and acceptance of the [religious] law. Moreover, [King Trdat] was diligent in the reading of Scripture. For he was well acquainted with Greek secular literature, having previously studied it, being especially knowledgeable in the science of philosophical thought.

864.-865. [Not translated, g436.]

866. Now the great archbishop, the blessed Gregory, with his holy son Aristake's and all their prominent assistants, circulated around with all his students and strengthened [the people] to remain firm in the commandments of truth.

867. At that time, [in Byzantium] Constantine, son of Constantius, reigned over the country of the Spaniards and Gauls. He believed in God, creator of heaven and earth, and in the Word, his only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit of his Godhead. He assembled the multitude of his forces by the shore of the vast Ocean sea [the Mediterranean], and made this vow with all of them that they should believe in the [Christian] truth. With one divine [g437] message they should become a perfect nation, glorifying the one God.

868. Then, trusting in God, [Constantine] went against the pagan kings—killing them all by the power of the divine cross: the foul and impious kings Diocletian and Marcianus, Maximianus, Lucinus, and Maxentius, as well as all the children of these loathsome pagan kings.

869.-871. [The piety of Byzantine emperor Constantine, g438-g439. Not translated.]

Classical Armenian text: [872. ff.](#)

872. At that time, news [of developments in Byzantium] reached the country of Greater Armenia, the court of the kingdom of the Arsacids, and Trdat, king of Greater Armenia. As soon as [Trdat] heard about [Constantine's conversion to Christianity], he offered great glory to the Lord of All. With rejoicing and great joy, he thanked Him who made His blessed name glorious throughout the entire country.

873. Now when Trdat, the great king of the Armenians, heard all of this, he took counsel about the journey [to visit Constantinople]. He made preparations to take with him the great archbishop Gregory, as well as his son, the bishop Aristake's, and the other bishop, Aghbianos. From the military [Trdat chose] the occupants of the four senior thrones in his court, who are called *bdeashxk'* ("borderlords"). Of these, the first was the borderlord of the Nor Shirakan area; second, the borderlord of the Asorestan area; third, the borderlord of the Aruastan area; and fourth, [the borderlord of the] Mask'ut' area. [In addition, Trdat took with him] the great prince of the House of Angegh, the coronant *aspet*, the great *sparapet* (commander-in-chief of the army); the prince of Mokka'; the prince of Siwnik'; the prince of R'shtunik'; the prince of the House of the Maghxaz-dom [g440], the *shahap* of Shahapiwan; and the prince [who was] master of the court (*spaskapetut'ean*). In addition, [Trdat took along] many other grandees, 70,000 select troops. [The delegation] proceeded from the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayrarat and crossed the border into the land of the Greeks.

874. With great joy [the travellers] passed over many lodging places. They were met with many exalted receptions and honors in every city and from all the princes. They hurried along by land and by sea until they reached the land of the Italians, the country of the Dalmatians, and [Rome] the city of the kings of the Romans.

875. News [of their arrival] was immediately conveyed to the royal palace. When this was heard by Constantine, [who had been] established by God as the honorable occupant of the throne, and by the great Patriarch, the archbishop of the royal court, who was named Eusebius, they went out before [their guests] with great love and honor. They rejoiced upon meeting one another. When [the guests] had been some time in the universal city, the pious Emperor Constantine asked King Trdat "How and in what manner did these miracles of God happen among you?" [g441].

876.-878. [Trdat summarizes events leading to his own and Armenia's conversion to Christianity, g442-g443. Not translated.]

879. Then, after this, they were exalted with solicitude and great splendor by the court, church officials, and the honorable princes of the city. With very great offerings and noteworthy gifts they were honored with affection.

Classical Armenian text: [880. ff.](#)

880. Then they took leave of the *Augusti* [who were garbed in robes] of purple, with the blessed *kat'oghikos* receiving the farewell from the Church and the prominent princes of the city. Successful in all matters, they mounted the royal carriage, decorated with gold, and with great [p443] pomp and splendor they embarked on their royal journey.

881. In all the cities they passed [*en route* home] they were most splendidly treated and exalted as befits royalty, until they arrived at the resting-places of the saints in the country of the Armenians, in the city of Vagharshapat, in the district of Ayrarat.

882. They brought there the gifts which had been given to them as offerings for the service of the church of God—gold, silver, and costly furnishings—and put them in the chapels of the holy martyrs. They also put there in the same resting-places of the saints, the gold vessels given by the emperor. And the churches they had built were made even more secure.

883. The great Gregory circulated around among his earlier students, strengthening them in the true teachings.

884. It was after this that the great emperor Constantine *Augustus* issued an order for all the bishops to assemble in the city of Nicaea. Then the great king Trdat and the blessed *kat'oghikos* Gregory prepared and dispatched Aristake's, who arrived at the great Council of Nicaea among all the bishops. It was there that the acceptable traditions of the faith and the orders of illumination were defined for the whole world [g444] including the established canons, the divine power of the will of God most high. It was there, too, that the great emperor Constantine entered and confessed the faith and was crowned with blessing by the assembly, leaving on earth a name for righteousness and establishing [for himself] righteousness in heaven.

885. Then the blessed Aristake's returned with glorious faith and with the confirmed Nicene canons which are pleasing to God, to make them known in the country of Armenia. He put before the king and the blessed *kat'oghikos* the traditions he had brought. And then saint Gregory made additions to these luminous canons, making ever more glorious his own see of the country of Armenia. With the united [support] of King Trdat, he illuminated [Armenia] all the days of his life [g445].

886.-891. [Not translated, g445-g448.]

892. Now as soon as we received the order of your highness—bravest of men Trdat—to write all this as is proper for a writer of chronicles, so did we arrange our work, putting everything in order after the Greek model of composition [g447].

893.-900. [Not translated, g447-g454.]
